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FIFTEEN  
SERMONS

Preached at the  
ROLLS CHAPEL

Upon the following SUBJECTS.

Upon Humane Nature.	Upon Forgiveness of Injuries.
Upon the Government of the Tongue.	Upon Self-deceit.
Upon Compassion.	Upon the Love of our Neighbour.
Upon the Character of <i>Balaam</i> .	Upon the Love of God.
Upon Resentment.	Upon the Ignorance of Man.

To which are added,

SIX SERMONS

Preached on PUBLICK OCCASIONS.

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By JOSEPH BUTLER, LL.D.  
Late Lord Bishop of DURHAM.

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The FIFTH EDITION.

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To the Right Honourable

Sir JOSEPH JEKYLL,

Master of the ROLLS, &c.

The following SERMONS,  
preached in his Chapel, are  
with all Humility Dedicated,

*BY*

*his most dutiful, and*

*most obedient Servant,*

JOSEPH BUTLER.

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T H E  
P R E F A C E.

THOUGH 'tis scarce possible to avoid judging, in some Way or other, of almost every thing which offers itself to one's Thoughts; yet 'tis certain that many Persons, from different Causes, never exercise their judgment, upon what comes before them, in the way of determining whether it be conclusive and holds. They are perhaps entertained with some things, not so with others; they like and they dislike: But whether that which is proposed to be made out, be really made out or not; whether a Matter be stated according to the real Truth of the Case, seems to the Generality of People merely a circumstance of no Consideration at all. Arguments are often wanted for some accidental Purpose: But Proof as such is what they never want for Themselves; for their own Satisfaction of Mind, or Conduct in Life. Not to mention the Multitudes who read merely for the sake of Talking, or to qualify themselves for the World, or some such Kind of Reasons; there are, even of

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the few who read for their own Entertainment, and have a real Curiosity to see what is said, several, which is prodigious, who have no sort of Curiosity to see what is true: I say, Curiosity; because 'tis too obvious to be mentioned, how much that religious and sacred Attention, which is due to Truth, and to the important Question, What is the Rule of Life, is lost out of the World.

FOR the Sake of this whole Class of Readers, for they are of different Capacities, different Kinds, and get into this way from different Occasions, I have often wished, that it had been the Custom to lay before People nothing in Matters of Argument but Premises, and leave them to draw Conclusions themselves; which, though it could not be done in all Cases, might in many.

THE great Number of Books and Papers of Amusement, which, of one kind or another, daily come in one's way, have in Part occasioned, and most perfectly fall in with and humour, this idle way of reading and considering things. By this Means, Time even in Solitude is happily got rid of, without the Pain of Attention: Neither is any Part of it more put to the Account of Idleness, one can scarce forbear saying, is spent with less Thought, than great Part of that which is spent in Reading.

THUS People habituate themselves to let things pass through their Minds, as one may speak,

speak, rather than to think of them. Thus by Use they become satisfied merely with seeing what is said, without going any further. Review and Attention, and even forming a Judgment, becomes Fatigue ; and to lay any thing before them that requires it, is putting them quite out of their Way.

T H E R E are also Persons, and there are at least more of them than have a Right to claim such Superiority, who take for granted, that they are acquainted with every thing ; and that no Subject, if treated in the Manner it should be, can be treated in any Manner but what is familiar and easy to them.

'T is true indeed, that few Persons have a Right to demand Attention ; but 'tis also true, that nothing can be understood without that Degree of it, which the very Nature of the Thing requires. Now Morals, considered as a Science, concerning which speculative Difficulties are daily raised, and treated with Regard to those Difficulties, plainly require a very peculiar Attention. For here Ideas never are in themselves determinate, but become so, by the Train of Reasoning and the Place they stand in ; since 'tis impossible that Words can always stand for the same Ideas, even in the same Author, much less in different ones. Hence an Argument may not readily be apprehended, which is different from its being mistaken ; and even Caution to avoid being mistaken, may, in some Cases,

render it less readily apprehended. 'Tis very unallowable for a Work of Imagination or Entertainment not to be of easy comprehension, but may be unavoidable in a Work of another Kind, where a Man is not to form or accommodate, but to state Things as he finds them.

It must be acknowledged that some of the following Discourses are very abstruse and difficult ; or, if you please, obscure : But I must take Leave to add, that those alone are Judges, whether or no and how far this is a Fault, who are Judges, whether or no and how far it might have been avoided—those only who will be at the Trouble to understand what is here said, and to see how far the Things here insisted upon, and not other Things, might have been put in a plainer Manner ; which yet I am very far from asserting that they could not.

Thus much however will be allowed, that general Criticisms concerning Obscurity considered as a distinct Thing from Confusion and Perplexity of Thought, as in some Cases there may be Ground for them ; so in others, they may be nothing more at the Bottom than Complaints, that every thing is not to be understood with the same Ease that some Things are. Confusion and Perplexity in Writing is indeed without Excuse, because any one may, if he pleases, know whether he understands and sees through what

what he is about : and 'tis unpardonable for a Man to lay his Thoughts before Others, when he is conscious that he himself does not know whereabouts he is, or how the Matter before him stands. 'Tis coming Abroad in Disorder, which he ought to be dissatisfied to find himself in at Home.

B U T even Obscurities arising from other Causes than the Abstruseness of the Argument, may not be always inexcusable. Thus a Subject may be treated in a Manner, which all along supposes the Reader acquainted with what has been said upon it, both by ancient and modern writers; and with what is the present state of Opinion in the World concerning such Subject. This will create a Difficulty of a very peculiar Kind, and even throw an Obscurity over the whole before those who are not thus informed ; but those who are, will be disposed to excuse such a Manner, and other Things of the like Kind, as a saving of their Patience.

H O W E V E R upon the whole, as the Title of *Sermons* gives some Right to expect what is plain and of easy Comprehension, and as the best Auditories are mixt, I shall not set about to justify the Propriety of Preaching, or under that Title Publishing, Discourses so abstruse as some of these are: Neither is it worth while to trouble the Reader with the Account of my doing either. He must not however impute to me, as a Repetition of the

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Impropriety, this second Edition \*, but to the Demand for it.

W H E T H E R he will think he has any Amends made him, by the following Illustrations of what seemed most to require them, I myself am by no Means a proper Judge.

T H E R E are two Ways in which the Subject of Morals may be treated. One begins from inquiring into the abstract Relations of Things: the other from a Matter of Fact, namely, what the particular Nature of Man is, its several Parts, their Oeconomy or Constitution; from whence it proceeds to determine what Course of Life it is, which is correspondent to this whole Nature. In the former Method the Conclusion is express'd thus, that Vice is contrary to the Nature and Reason of Things: In the latter, that 'tis a Violation or Breaking in upon our own Nature. Thus they both lead us to the same Thing, our Obligations to the Practice of Virtue; and thus they exceedingly strengthen and enforce each other, The first seems the most direct formal Proof, and in some Respects the least liable to Cavil and Dispute: The latter is in a peculiar Manner adapted to satisfy a fair Mind; and is more easily applicable

\* The Preface stands exactly as it did before the second Edition of the Sermons.

plicable to the several particular Relations and Circumstances in Life.

THE following Discourses proceed chiefly in this latter Method. The three first wholly. They were intended to explain what is meant by the Nature of Man, when it is said that Virtue consists in following, and Vice in deviating from it; and by explaining to shew that the Assertion is true. That the antient Moralists had some inward Feeling or other, which they chose to express in this Manner, that Man is born to Virtue, that it consists in following Nature, and that Vice is more contrary to this Nature than Tortures or Death, their Works in our Hands are Instances. Now a Person who found no Mystery in this Way of speaking of the Ancients; who, without being very explicit with himself, kept to his natural Feeling, went along with them, and found within himself a full Conviction that what they laid down was just and true; such an one would probably wonder to see a Point, in which he never perceived any Difficulty, so laboured as this is, in the second and third Sermons; insomuch perhaps as to be at a Loss for the Occasion, Scope and Drift of them. But it need not be thought strange that this Manner of Expression, though familiar with them, and, if not usually carried so far, yet not uncommon amongst Ourselves, should want explaining; since there are several Perceptions daily felt and spoken of, which

which yet it may not be very easy at first View to explicate, to distinguish from all others, and ascertain exactly what the Idea or Perception is. The many Treatises upon the Passions are a Proof of this; since so many would never have undertaken to unfold their several Complications, and trace and resolve them into their Principles, if they had thought, what they were endeavouring to shew, was obvious to every one, who felt and talked of those Passions. Thus, though there seems no Ground to doubt, but that the Generality of Mankind have the inward Perception express'd so commonly in that Manner by the ancient Moralists, more than to doubt whether they have those Passions; yet it appeared of Use to unfold that inward Conviction, and lay it open in a more explicit Manner, than I had seen done; especially when there were not wanting Persons, who manifestly mistook the whole Thing, and so had great Reason to express themselves dissatisfied with it. A late Author of great and deserved Reputation, says, that to place Virtue in following Nature, is at best a loose Way of Talk. And he has Reason to say this, if what I think he intends to express, though with great Decency, be true, that scarce any other Sense can be put upon those Words, but acting as any of the several Parts without Distinction, of a Man's Nature happened most to incline him.\*.

W H O E V E R

\* Rel. of Nature delin. Ed. 1724. P. 22, 23.

W H O E V E R thinks it worth while to consider this Matter thoroughly, should begin with stating to himself exactly the Idea of a System, Oeconomy or Constitution of any particular Nature, or particular any Thing: And he will, I suppose, find, that 'tis an One or a Whole, made up of several Parts; but yet, that the several Parts even considered as a Whole, do not compleat the Idea, unless in the notion of a Whole, you include the Relations and Respects, which those Parts have to each other. Every Work both of Nature and of Art is a System: And as every particular Thing both natural and artificial is for some Use or Purpose out of and beyond itself, one may add, to what has been already brought into the Idea of a System, its Conduciveness to this one or more Ends. Let us Instance in a Watch—Suppose the several Parts of it taken to Pieces, and placed apart from each other: Let a Man have ever so exact a Notion of these several Parts, unless he considers the Respects and Relations which they have to each other, he will not have any Thing like the Idea of a Watch. Suppose these several Parts brought together and any how united: Neither will he yet, be the Union ever so close, have an Idea which will bear any Resemblance to that of a Watch. But let him view those several Parts put together, or consider them as to be put together in the Manner of a Watch; let him form a Notion

Notion of the Relations which those several Parts have to each other—all conducive in their respective Ways, to this Purpose, shewing the hour of the Day ; and then he has the Idea of a Watch. Thus it is with Regard to the inward Frame of Man. Appetites, Passions, Affections, and the Principle of Reflection, considered merely as the several Parts of our inward Nature, do not at all give us an Idea of the System or Constitution of this Nature : Because the Constitution is formed by somewhat not yet taken into Consideration, namely by the Relations, which these several Parts have to each other ; the chief of which is the Authority of Reflection or Conscience. 'Tis from considering the Relations which the several Appetites and Passions in the inward Frame have to each other, and above all the Supremacy of Reflection or Conscience, that we get the Idea of the System or Constitution of Humane Nature. And from the Idea itself 'twill as fully appear, that this our Nature *i. e.* Constitution is adapted to Virtue, as from the Idea of a Watch it appears, that its Nature, *i. e.* Constitution or System is adapted to measure Time. What in Fact or Event commonly happens, is nothing to this Question. Every Work of Art is apt to be out of Order : But this is so far from being according to its System, that let the Disorder increase, and 'twill totally destroy it. This is merely by Way of Explanation,

nation, what an Oeconomy, System or Constitution is. And thus far the Cases are perfectly parallel. If we go further, there is indeed a Difference, nothing to the present Purpose, but too important a one ever to be omitted. A Machine is inanimate and passive: But we are Agents. Our Constitution is put in our own Power. We are charged with it: And therefore are accountable for any Disorder or Violation of it.

Thus nothing can possibly be more contrary to Nature than Vice; meaning by Nature, not only the *several Parts* of our internal Frame, but also the *Constitution* of it. Poverty and Disgrace, Tortures and Death are not so contrary to it. Misery and Injustice are indeed equally contrary to some different Parts of our Nature taken singly: But Injustice is moreover contrary to the whole Constitution of the Nature.

If it be asked whether this Constitution be really what those Philosophers meant, and whether they would have explained themselves in this Manner: The Answer is the same, as if it should be asked, whether a Person, who had often used the Word Resentment and felt the Thing, would have explained this Passion exactly in the same Manner, in which 'tis done in one of these Discourses. As I have no Doubt, but that this is a true Account of that Passion, which he referr'd to and intended to express by the Word Resentment;

ment; so I have no Doubt, but that this is the true Account of the Ground of that Conviction, which they referred to, when they said, Vice was contrary to Nature. And though it should be thought that they meant no more than, that Vice was contrary to the higher and better Part of our Nature; even this implies such a Constitution as I have endeavoured to explain. For the very Terms, higher and better, imply a Relation or Respect of Parts to each other; and these relative Parts, being in one and the same Nature, form a Constitution, and are the very Idea of it. They had a Perception that Injustice was contrary to their Nature, and that Pain was so also. They observed these two Perceptions totally different, not in Degree, but in Kind: And the reflecting upon each of them as they thus stood in their Nature, wrought a full intuitive Conviction, that more was due, and of Right belonged to one of these inward Perceptions, than to the other; that it demanded in all Cases to govern such a Creature as Man. So that upon the whole, this is a fair and true Account of what was the Ground of their Conviction; of what they intended to refer to when they said, Virtue consisted in following Nature: A Manner of speaking not loose and undeterminate, but clear and distinct, strictly just and true.

THOUGHT I am peasuaded the Force of this Conviction is felt by almost every one; yet

yet since, considered as an Argument and put in Words, it appears somewhat abstruse, and since the connection of it is broken in the three first Sermons, it may not be amiss to give the Reader the whole Argument here in one View.

M A N K I N D has various Instincts and Principles of Action, as brute Creatures have; some leading most directly and immediately to the good of the Community, and some most directly to private Good.

M A N has several which Brutes have not; particularly Reflection or Conscience, an Approbation of some Principles or Actions, and Disapprobation of others.

B R U T E S obey their Instincts or Principles of Action, according to certain Rules; suppose the Constitution of their Body, and the Objects around them.

T H E generality of Mankind also obey their Instincts and Principles, all of them; those Propensions we call Good, as well as the Bad, according to the same Rules; namely the Constitution of their Body, and the external Circumstances which they are in. [Therefore it is not a true Representatation of Mankind, to affirm that they are wholly governed by Self-love, the love of Power and sensual Appetites: Since, as on the one Hand, they are often actuated by these, without any Regard to Right or Wrong; so on the other, 'tis manifest fact, that the same Persons, the Generality, are frequently influenced by Friendship, Compassion, Gratitude; and even

a general Abhorrence of what is base, and liking of what is fair and just, takes its Turn amongst the other Motives of Action. This is the partial inadequate Notion of Human Nature treated of in the first Discourse: And 'tis by this Nature, if one may speak so, that the World is in fact influenced, and kept in that tolerable Order, in which it is.]

BRUTES in acting according to the Rules before-mentioned, their bodily Constitution and Circumstances, act suitably to their whole Nature. [It is however to be distinctly noted, that the reason why we affirm this, is not merely that Brutes in fact act so; for this alone, however universal, does not at all determine, whether such Course of Action be correspondent to their whole Nature: But the Reason of the Assertion is, that as in acting thus, they plainly act conformably to somewhat in their Nature, so from all Observations we are able to make upon them, there does not appear the least Ground to imagine them to have any thing else in their Nature, which requires a different Rule or Course of Action.]

MANKIND also in acting thus would act suitably to their whole Nature, if no more were to be said of Man's Nature, than what has been now said; if That, as it is a true, were also a compleat, adequate Account of our Nature.

BUT That is not a compleat Account of Man's Nature. Somewhat further must be brought

brought in to give us an adequate Notion of it; namely that one of those Principles of Action, Conscience or Reflection, compared with the rest as they all stand together in the Nature of Man, plainly bears upon it Marks of Authority over all the rest, and claims the absolute Direction of them all, to allow or forbid their Gratifications: A Disapprobation of Reflection being in itself a Principle manifestly superior to a mere Propension. And the Conclusion is, that to allow no more to this superior Principle or Part of our Nature, than to other Parts; to let it govern and guide only occasionally in common with the rest, as its Turn happens to come, from the Temper and Circumstances one happens to be in; this is not to act conformably to the Constitution of Man: Neither can any Human Creature be said to act conformably to his Constitution of Nature, unless he allows to that superior Principle the absolute Authority which is due to it. And this Conclusion is abundantly confirmed from hence, that one may determine what Course of Action the Oeconomy of Man's Nature requires, without so much as knowing in what Degree of *Strength* the several Principles prevail, or which of them have actually the greatest Influence.

THE practical Reason of insisting so much upon this natural Authority of the Principle of Reflection or Conscience is, that it seems in great Measure overlooked by many, who

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are by no Means the worse sort of Men. 'Tis thought sufficient to abstain from gross Wickedness, and to be humane and kind to such as happen to come in their Way. Whereas in reality the very Constitution of our Nature requires, that we bring our whole Conduct before this superior Faculty; wait its Determination; enforce upon ourselves its Authority, and make it the Business of our Lives, as it is absolutely the whole Business of a Moral Agent, to conform ourselves to it. This is the true Meaning of that ancient Precept, *Reverence thy Self.*

THE not taking into Consideration this Authority, which is implied in the Idea of reflex Approbation or Disapprobation, seems a material Deficiency or Omission in *Lord Shaftsbury's Inquiry concerning Virtue*. He has shewn beyond all Contradiction, that Virtue is naturally the Interest or Happiness, and Vice the Misery of such a Creature as Man, placed in the Circumstances which we are in this World. But suppose there are particular Exceptions; a Case which this Author was unwilling to put, and yet surely it is to be put: Or suppose a Case which he has put and determined, that of a Sceptick not convinced of this happy Tendency of Virtue, or being of a contrary Opinion. His Determination is, that 'twould be *without Remedy* \*. One may say more explicitly, that leaving out the Authority of reflex Approbation or Dis-

\* *Characteristicks.* V. II. p. 69.

Disapprobation, such an one would be under an Obligation to act viciously ; since Interest, one's own Happiness, is a manifest Obligation, and there is not supposed to be any other Obligation in the Case. " But does " it much mend the Matter, to take in that " natural Authority of Reflection? There " indeed would be an Obligation to Virtue ; " but would not the Obligation from sup- " posed Interest on the side of Vice remain ?" If it should, yet to be under two contrary Obligations, *i. e.* under none at all, would not be exactly the same, as to be under a formal Obligation to be vicious, or to be in Circumstances in which the Constitution of Man's Nature plainly required, that Vice should be preferred. But the Obligation on the side of Interest really does not remain. For the natural Authority of the Principle of Reflection, is an Obligation the most near and intimate, the most certain and known : Whereas the contrary Obligation can at the utmost appear no more than probable ; since no Man can be *certain* in any Circumstances, that Vice is his Interest in the present World, much less can he be certain against another : And thus the certain Obligation would entirely supersede and destroy the uncertain one ; which yet would have been of real Force without the former.

IN Truth the taking in this Consideration, totally changes the whole state of the Case ; and shews, what this Author does not

seem to have been aware of, that the greatest Degree of Scepticism which He thought possible, will still leave Men under the strictest Moral Obligations, whatever their Opinion be concerning the Happiness of Virtue. For that Mankind upon Reflection felt an Approbation of what was Good, and Disapprobation of the Contrary. He thought a plain Matter of Fact, as it undoubtedly is, which none could deny, but from mere Affectation. Take in then that Authority and Obligation, which is a constituent Part of this reflex Approbation, and it will undeniably follow, though a Man should doubt of every thing else, yet, that he would still remain under the nearest and most certain Obligation to the Practice of Virtue; an Obligation implied in the very Idea of Virtue, in the very Idea of reflex Approbation.

AND how little Influence soever this Obligation alone, can be expected to have in Fact upon Mankind, yet one may appeal even to Interest and Self-love, and ask, since from Man's Nature, Condition, and the Shortness of Life, so little, so very little indeed, can possibly in any Case be gained by Vice; whether it be so prodigious a thing to sacrifice that little, to the most intimate of all Obligations; and which a Man cannot transgress without being Self-condemned, and, unless he has corrupted his Nature, without real Self-dislike: This Question I say may be asked, even upon Supposition that

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the Prospect of a future Life were ever so uncertain.

THE Observation that Man is thus by his very nature a Law to himself, pursued to its just Consequences, is of the utmost Importance; because from it 'twill follow, that though Men should, through Stupidity or Speculative Scepticism, be ignorant of, or disbelieve any Authority in the Universe to punish the Violation of this Law; yet, if there should be such Authority, they would be as really liable to Punishment, as though they had been before-hand convinced, that such Punishment would follow. For in whatever Sense we understand Justice, even supposing, what I think would be very presumptuous to assert, that the End of Divine Punishment is no other than that of civil Punishment, namely to prevent future Mischief; upon this bold supposition, Ignorance or Disbelief of the Sanction would by no Means exempt even from this Justice: Because it is not Foreknowledge of the Punishment, which renders obnoxious to it; but merely violating a known Obligation.

AND here it comes in one's Way to take Notice of a manifest Error or Mistake, in the Author now cited, unless perhaps he has incautiously expressed himself so as to be misunderstood; namely, that *it is Malice only, and not Goodness, which can make us afraid* \*. Whereas in Reality, Goodness is the natural

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and just Object of the greatest Fear to an ill Man. Malice may be appeased or satiated ; Humour may change, but Goodness is a fixt, steady, immoveable Principle of Action. If either of the former holds the Sword of Justice, there is plainly Ground for the greatest of Crimes to hope for Impunity : But if it be Goodness, there can be no possible Hope, whilst the Reasons of Things, or the Ends of Government, call for Punishment. Thus every one sees how much greater Chance of Impunity, an ill Man has, in a partial Administration, than in a just and upright one. It is said that *the Interest or Good of the Whole, must be the Interest of the universal Being, and that He can have no other.* Be it so. This Author has proved, that Vice is naturally the Misery of Mankind in this World. Consequently it was for the Good of the Whole, that it should be so. What Shadow of Reason then is there to assert, that this may not be the Case hereafter ? Danger of future Punishment (and if there be Danger, there is Ground of Fear) no more supposes Malice, than the present Feeling of Punishment does.

THE Sermon upon the *Character of Balaam*, and that upon *Self-Deceit* both relate to one Subject. I am persuaded, that a very great Part of the Wickedness of the World, is, one Way or other, owing to the Self-partiality, Self-flattery and Self-deceit endeavoured there to be laid open and explained.

'Tis

'Tis to be observed amongst Persons of the lowest Rank, in Proportion to their Compass of Thought, as much as amongst Men of Education and Improvement. It seems, that People are capable of being thus artful with Themselves, in Proportion as they are capable of being so with others. Those who have taken Notice that there is really such a Thing, namely, plain Falseness and Insincerity in Men with Regard to Themselves, will readily see the Drift and Design of these Discourses: And nothing, that I can add, will explain the Design of them to him, who has not before-hand remarked, at least, somewhat of the Character. And yet, the Admonitions they contain, may be as much wanted by such a Person, as by Others; for 'tis to be noted, that a Man may be intirely possess'd by this Unfairness of Mind, without having the least speculative Notion what the Thing is.

THE Account given of *Resentment* in the Eighth Sermon, is introductory to the following one *Upon Forgiveness of Injuries*. It may possibly have appeared to some, at first sight, a strange Assertion, that Injury is the only natural Object of settled Resentment, or that Men do not in Fact resent deliberately any Thing but under this Appearance of Injury. But I must desire the Reader not to take any Assertion alone by itself, but to consider the Whole of what is said upon it: Because this is necessary, not only in order to judge

judge of the Truth of it, but often, such is the Nature of Language, to see the very Meaning of the Assertion. Particularly as to this, Injury and Injustice is, in the Sermon itself, explained to mean, not only the more gross and shocking Instances of Wickedness, but also Contempt, Scorn, Neglect, any sort of disagreeable Behaviour towards a Person, which he thinks other than what is due to him. And the general Notion of Injury or Wrong, plainly comprehends this, though the Words are mostly confined to the higher Degrees of it.

F O R G I V E N E S S of Injuries is one of the very few moral Obligations which has been disputed. But the Proof that it is really an Obligation, what our Nature and Condition require, seems very obvious, were it only from the Consideration that Revenge is doing Harm merely for Harm's Sake. And as to the love of our Enemies: Resentment cannot supercede the Obligation to universal Benevolence, unless they are in the Nature of the thing inconsistent, which they plainly are not\*.

T H I S Divine Precept, to forgive Injuries and love our Enemies, though to be met with in Gentile Moralists, yet is in a peculiar Sense a Precept of Christianity; as our Saviour has insisted more upon it, than upon any other single Virtue. One Reason of this doubtless is, that it so peculiarly becomes an imperfect, faulty Creature. But it may be observed

\* P. 165.

observed also, that a virtuous Temper of Mind, Consciousness of Innocence and good Meaning towards every body, and a strong Feeling of Injustice and Injury, may itself, such is the Imperfection of our Virtue, lead a Person to violate this Obligation, if he be not upon his Guard. And it may well be supposed, that this is another Reason why it is so much insisted upon by Him, who *knew what was in Man.*

THE chief Design of the Eleventh Discourse is to state the Notion of Self-love and Disinterestedness, in Order to shew that Benevolence is not more unfriendly to Self-love, than any other particular Affection whatever. There is a strange Affectation in many People of explaining away all particular Affections, and representing the whole of Life as nothing but one continued Exercise of Self-love. Hence arises that surprizing Confusion and Perplexity in the *Epicureans* \* of old, *Hobbs*, the Author of *Reflections Sentences et Maxims Morales*, and this whole Sett of Writers;

\* One need only look into *Torquatus's* Account of the Epicurean System, in *Cicero's* first Book *De Finibus*, to see, in what a surprizing Manner this was done by Them. Thus the Desire of Praise, and of being beloved, he explains to be no other than Desire of Safety: Regard to our Country, even in the most virtuous Character, to be nothing but Regard to Ourselves. The Author of *Reflections. &c. Morales*, says, Curiosity proceeds from Interest or Pride; which Pride also would doubtless have been explained to be Self-love. Pag. 85. Ed. 1725. As if there were no such Passions in Mankind, as Desire of Esteem, or of being beloved, or of Knowledge. *Hobbs's* Account of the Affections of Good-will and Pity, are Instances of the same Kind.

Writers ; the confusion of calling Actions interested which are done in Contradiction to the most manifest known Interest, merely for the Gratification of a present Passion. Now all this Confusion might easily be avoided, by stating to Ourselves wherein the Idea of Self-love in general consists, as distinguished from all particular Movements towards particular external Objects ; the Appetites of Sense, Resentment, Compassion, Curiosity, Ambition, and the rest \*. When this is done, if the Words *Selfish* and *Interested* cannot be parted with, but must be applied to every thing ; yet, to avoid such total Confusion of all Language, let the Distinction be made by Epithets : And the first may be called cool or settled Selfishness, and the other passionate or sensual Selfishness. But the most natural Way of speaking plainly is, to call the first only, Self-love, and the Actions proceeding from it, Interested : And to say of the latter, that they are not love to Ourselves, but Movements towards somewhat external : Honour, Power, the Harm or Good of Another : And that the Pursuit of these external Objects, so far as it proceeds from these Movements (for it may proceed from Self-love †) is no otherwise interested, than as every Action of every Creature must, from the Nature of the Thing, be ; for no one can act but from a Desire, or Choice, or Preference of his own.

S E L F - L O V E

\* p. 205. &c.

† See the Note, p. 9.

SELF-Love and any particular Passion may be joined together; and from this Complication, it becomes impossible in numberless instances to determine precisely, how far an Action, perhaps even of one's own, has for it's Principle general Self-love, or some particular passion. But this need create no Confusion in the Ideas themselves of Self-love and particular Passions. We distinctly discern what one is, and what the other are: though we may be uncertain how far one of the other influences us. And though from this Uncertainty, it cannot but be, that there will be different Opinions concerning Mankind, as more or less governed by Interest: and some will ascribe actions to Self-love, which Others will ascribe to particular Passions: Yet 'tis absurd to say that Mankind are wholly actuated by either; since 'tis manifest that both have their Influence. For as on the one Hand, Men form a general Notion of Interest, some placing it in one Thing, and some in another, and have a considerable Regard to it throughout the Course of their Life, which is owing to Self-love; so on the other Hand, they are often set on Work by the particular Passions themselves, and a considerable Part of Life is spent in the actual Gratification of them, *i. e.* is employed, not by Self-love, but by the Passions.

BESIDES, the very Idea of an interested Pursuit, necessarily pre-supposes particular Passions and Appetites; since the very Idea

Idea of Interest or Happiness consists in this, that an Appetite or Affection enjoys its Object. 'Tis not because we love Ourselves that we find Delight in such and such Objects, but because we have particular Affections towards them. Take away these Affections, and you leave Self-love absolutely nothing at all to employ itself about \*; no End or Object for it to pursue, excepting only that of avoiding Pain. Indeed the *Epicureans*, who maintained that Absence of Pain was the highest Happiness, might, consistently with themselves, deny all Affection, and, if they had so pleased, every sensual Appetite too: But the very Idea of Interest or Happiness other than Absence of Pain, implies particular Appetites or Passions; these being necessary to constitute that Interest or Happiness.

THE Observation that Benevolence is no more disinterested than any of the common particular Passions †, seems in itself worth being taken Notice of; but is insisted upon to obviate that Scorn, which one sees rising upon the Faces of People who are said to know the World, when Mention is made of a disinterested, generous or public-spirited Action. The Truth of that Observation might be made appear, in a more formal Manner of Proof: For whoever will consider all the possible Respects and Relations which any particular Affection can have to Self-love and private Interest, will, I think, see demonstrably,

\* pag. 210.

† pag. 213, &c.

monstrably, that Benevolence is not in any Respect more at Variance with Self-love, than any other particular Affection whatever, but that it is in every Respect, at least, as friendly to it.

IF the Observation be true, it follows, that Self-Love and Benevolence, Virtue and Interest, are not to be opposed, but only to be distinguished from each other; in the same Way as Virtue and any other particular Affection, Love of Arts, suppose, are to be distinguished. Every Thing is what it is, and not another Thing. The Goodness or Badness of Actions does not arise from hence, that the Epithet, interested or disinterested, may be applied to them, any more than that any other indifferent Epithet, suppose inquisitive or jealous, may or may not be applied to them; not from their being attended with present or future Pleasure or Pain; but from their being what they are: Namely, what becomes such Creatures as we are, what the State of the Case requires, or the contrary. Or in other Words, we may judge and determine, that an Action is morally Good or Evil, before we so much as consider, whether it be interested or disinterested. This Consideration no more comes in to determine, whether an Action be virtuous, than to determine whether it be resentful. Self-love in its due Degree is as just and morally Good, as any Affection whatever. Benevolence towards particular Persons

Persons may be to a Degree of Weakness, and so be blameable: And Disinterestedness is so far from being in itself commendable, that the utmost possible Depravity, which we can in Imagination conceive, is that of disinterested Cruelty.

NEITHER does there appear any Reason to wish Self-love were weaker in the Generality of the World, than it is. The Influence which it has, seems plainly owing to its being constant and habitual, which it cannot but be, and not to the Degree or Strength of it. Every Caprice of the Imagination, every Curiosity of the Understanding, every Affection of the Heart, is perpetually shewing its Weakness, by prevailing over it. Men daily, hourly sacrifice the greatest known Interest, to Fancy, Inquisitiveness, Love or Hatred, any vagrant Inclination. The Thing to be lamented is, not that Men have so great Regard to their own Good or Interest in the present World, for they have not enough \*; but that they have so little to the Good of Others. And this seems plainly owing to their being so much engaged in the Gratification of particular Passions unfriendly to Benevolence, and which happen to be most prevalent in them, much more than to Self-love. As a Proof of this may be observed, that there is no Character more void of Friendship, Gratitude, natural Affection, Love to their Country, common Justice,

\* Pag. 21

Justice, or more equally and uniformly hard-hearted, than the *abandoned* in, what is called, the Way of Pleasure——hard-hearted and totally without Feeling in Behalf of Others; except when they cannot escape the Sight of Distress, and so are interrupted by it in their Pleasures. And yet it is ridiculous to call such an abandoned Course of Pleasure interested, when the person engaged in it knows before-hand, and goes on under the Feeling and Apprehension, that it will be as ruinous to himself, as to those who depend upon him.

U P O N the Whole, if the Generality of Mankind were to cultivate within themselves the Principle of Self-love; if they were to accustom themselves often to set down and consider, what was the greatest Happiness they were capable of attaining for themselves in this Life, and if Self-love were so strong and prevalent, as that they would uniformly pursue this their supposed chief temporal Good, without being diverted from it by any particular Passion; it would manifestly prevent numberless Follies and Vices. This was in a great Measure the *Epicurean* System of Philosophy. It is indeed by no Means the religious, or even moral Institution of Life. Yet, with all the Mistakes Men would fall into about Interest, it would be less mischievous, than the Extravagancies of mere Appetite, Will and Pleasure: For certainly Self-love, though confined to the Interest of this Life, is, of the two, a much

better Guide than Passion \*, which has absolutely no Bound nor Measure, but what is set to it by this Self-love, or Moral Considerations.

FROM the Distinction above made between Self-love, and the several particular Principles or Affections in our Nature, we may see how good Ground there was for that Assertion, maintained by the several ancient Schools of Philosophy, against the *Epicureans*, namely, that Virtue is to be pursued as an End, eligible in and for itself. For, if there be any Principles or Affections in the Mind of Man distinct from Self-love, that the Things those Principles tend towards, or that the Objects of those Affections are, each of them, in themselves eligible, to be pursued upon its own Account, and to be rested in as an End, is implied in the very Idea of such Principle or Affection †. They indeed asserted much higher Things of Virtue, and with very good Reason; but to say thus much of it, that it is to be pursued for itself, is to say no more of it, than may truly be said of the Object of every natural Affection whatever.

THE Question, which was a few Years ago disputed in *France*, concerning the *Love of God*, which was there called Enthusiasm, as it will every where by the Generality of the World; this Question I say, answers in *Religion*, to that old one in *Morals* now mentioned.

tioned. And both of them are, I think, fully determined by the same Observation, namely, that the very Nature of Affection, the Idea itself, necessarily implies resting in its Object as an End.

I S H A L L not here add any thing further, to what I have said in the two Discourses upon that most important Subject, but only this: That if we are constituted such sort of Creatures, as from our very Nature, to feel certain Affections or Movements of Mind, upon the Sight or Contemplation of the meanest inanimate Part of the Creation, for the Flowers of the Field have their Beauty; certainly there must be somewhat due to Him Himself, who is the Author and Cause of all Things; who is more intimately present to us, than any thing else can be, and with whom we have a nearer and more constant Intercourse, than we can have with any Creature: There must be some Movements of Mind and Heart which correspond to his Perfections, or of which those Perfections are the natural Object. And that when we are commanded to *love the Lord our God, with all our Heart, and with all our Mind, and with all our Soul*; somewhat more must be meant than merely that we live in Hope of Rewards, or Fear of Punishments from Him; somewhat more than this must be intended: Though these Regards themselves are most just and reasonable, and absolutely

necessary to be often recollected, in such a World as this.

IT may be proper just to advertise the Reader, that he is not to look for any particular Reason for the Choice of the greatest Part of these Discourses; their being taken from amongst many Others, preached in the same Place, through a Course of Eight Years, being in great Measure accidental. Neither is he to expect to find any other Connection between them, than that Uniformity of Thought and Design, which will always be found in the Writings of the same Person, when he writes with Simplicity and in Earnest.

*Stanhope, Sept. the 16th, 1729.*

C O N-

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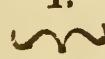
# S E R M O N I.

*Upon Humane Nature.*

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R O M. xii. 4, 5.

For as we have many Members in one Body, and all Members have not the same Office: So we being many are one Body in Christ, and every one Members one of another.

**T**H E Epistles in the New Testa- SERM.  
ment have all of them a particular I.  
Reference to the Condition and   
Usages of the Christian World at  
the Time they were written. Therefore as  
they cannot be thoroughly understood, unless  
that Condition and those Usages are known

B

and

S E R M. and attended to: so further, though they be

I. known, yet if they be discontinued or changed; ~~~ Exhortations, Precepts, and Illustrations of things, which refer to such Circumstances now ceased or altered, cannot at this Time be urged in that Manner, and with that Force which they were to the Primitive Christians. Thus the Text now before us, in it's first Intent and Design, relates to the decent Management of those extraordinary Gifts which were then in the Church \*, but which are now totally ceased. And even as to the Allusion that *we are one body in Christ*; though what the Apostle here intends is equally true of Christians in all Circumstances; and the Consideration of it is plainly still an additional Motive, over and above moral Considerations, to the Discharge of the several Duties and Offices of a Christian: Yet it is manifest this Allusion must have appeared with much greater Force to those, who by the many Difficulties they went through for the sake of their Religion, were led to keep always in View the Relation they stood in to their Saviour, who had undergone the same; to those, who from the Idolatries of all around them, and their ill Treatment,

ment, were taught to consider themselves S E R M. as not of the world in which they lived, I. but as a distinct Society of themselves; with Laws and Ends, and Principles of Life and Action, quite contrary to those which the World profess'd themselves at that Time influenced by. Hence the Relation of a Christian was by them considered as nearer than that of Affinity and Blood; and they almost literally esteemed themselves as Members one of another.

IT cannot indeed possibly be denied, that our being God's Creatures, and Virtue being the natural Law we are born under, and the whole Constitution of Man being plainly adapted to it, are prior Obligations to Piety and Virtue, than the Consideration that God sent his Son into the World to save it, and the Motives which arise from the peculiar Relation of Christians, as Members one of another under Christ our Head. However, though all this be allowed, as it expressly is by the inspired Writers; yet 'tis manifest that Christians at the Time of the Revelation, and immediately after, could not but insist mostly upon Considerations of this latter Kind.

## A SERMON

SER.M. THESE Observations show the original

I. particular Reference of the Text; and the  
peculiar Force with which the Thing intended  
by the Allusion in it, must have been felt  
by the primitive Christian World. They  
likewise afford a Reason for treating it at  
this Time in a more general Way.

THE Relation, which the several Parts or  
Members of the natural Body have to each  
other and to the whole Body, is here compared  
to the Relation which each particular Person  
in Society, has to other particular Persons and  
to the whole Society: And the latter is in-  
tended to be illustrated by the former. And  
if there be a Likeness between these two  
Relations, the Consequence is obvious: That  
the latter shows us we were intended to do  
good to others, as the former shows us that  
the several Members of the natural Body  
were intended to be Instruments of  
Good to each other and to the whole Body.  
But as there is scarce any Ground for  
a Comparison between Society and the mere  
material Body, this without the Mind being  
a dead unactive Thing; much less can the  
Comparison be carried to any length. And  
since the Apostle speaks of the several Mem-  
bers as having distinct Offices, which im-  
plies

## Upon Humane Nature.

5

plies the Mind ; it cannot be thought an un- S E R M. allowable Liberty ; instead of the *Body* and I. its *Members*, to substitute the *whole Nature of Man*, and *all the variety of internal Principles which belong to it*. And then the Comparison will be between the Nature of Man as respecting Self, and tending to private Good, his own Preservation and Happiness ; and the Nature of Man as having respect to Society, and tending to promote public Good, the Happiness of that Society. These Ends do indeed perfectly coincide ; and to aim at public and private Good are so far from being inconsistent, that they mutually promote each other : Yet in the following Discourse they must be considered as entirely distinct ; otherwise the Nature of Man as tending to one, or as tending to the other, cannot be compared. There can no comparison be made, without considering the Things compared as distinct and different.

From this Review and Comparison of the Nature of Man as respecting Self, and as respecting Society, it will plainly appear, that there are as real and the same kind of Indications in Humane Nature, that we were made for Society and to do good to our Fel-

## A SERMON

SER. low-creatures ; as that we were intended to

I. take Care of our own Life and Health and  
~~ private Good : And that the same Objections  
lie against one of these Assertions, as against  
the other. For

First, THERE is a natural Principle of Benevolence \* in Man ; which is in some Degree to Society, what Self-love is to the Individual.

\* Suppose a Man of Learning to be writing a grave Book upon *Humane Nature*, and to shew in several Parts of it that he had an Insight into the Subject he was considering ; Amongst other Things, the following one would require to be accounted for ; The Appearance of Benevolence or Good-will in Men towards each other in the Instances of Natural Relation, and in others †. Cautious of being deceived with outward Show, he retires within himself to see exactly, what That is in the Mind of Man from whence this Appearance proceeds ; and, upon deep Reflection, asserts the Principle in the Mind to be only the Love of Power, and Delight in the Exercise of it. Would not every Body think here was a Mistake of one Word for another ? That the Philosopher was contemplating and accounting for some other *Humane Actions*, some other Behaviour of Man to Man ? And could any one be thoroughly satisfied, that what is commonly called Benevolence or Good-will was really the Affection meant, but only by being made to understand that this Learned Person had a general Hypothesis, to which the Appearance of Good-will could no otherwise be reconciled ? That what has this Appearance is often nothing but Ambition ; That Delight in Superiority often (suppose always) mixes itself with Benevolence, only makes it more specious to call it Ambition than Hunger, of the two : But in reality that Passion does no more account for the whole Appearances of Good-will, than this Appetite does. Is there not often the Appearance of one Man's wishing that Good to another,

# Upon Humane Nature.

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dual. And if there be in Mankind any SERM. Disposition to Friendship; If there be any such thing as Compaffion, for Compaffion

B 4

is

another, which he knows himself unable to procure him; and rejoicing in it, though bestowed by a third Person? And can Love of power any way possibly come in to account for this Desire or Delight? Is there not often the Appearance of Mens distinguishing between two or more Persons, preferring one before another, to do Good to, in Cases where Love of Power cannot in the least account for the Distinction and Preference? For this Principle can no otherwise distinguish between Objects, than as it is a greater Instance and Exertion of Power to do good to one rather than to another. Again, Suppose Good-will in the Mind of Man to be nothing but Delight in the exercise of Power: Men might indeed be restrained by distant and accidental Consideration; but these Restraints being removed, they would have a Disposition to, and Delight in Mischief as an Exercise and Proof of Power: And this Disposition and Delight would arise from, or be the same Principle in the Mind, as a Disposition to, and Delight in Charity. Thus Cruelty, as distinct from Envy and Resentment, would be exactly the same in the Mind of Man as Good-will: That one tends to the Happiness, the other to the Misery of our Fellow-Creatures, is, it seems, merely an accidental Circumstance, which the Mind has not the least Regard to. These are the Absurdities which even Men of Capacity run into, when they have occasion to belie their Nature, and will perversely disclaim that Image of God which was originally stamped upon it (the Traces of which, however faint, are plainly discernable upon the Mind of Man. † Hobbs of Human Nature. c. 9 § 17.

If any Person can in earnest doubt, whether there be such a thing as Good-will in one Man towards another; (for the Question is not concerning either the Degree or Extensiveness of it, but concerning the Affection itself;) let it be observed, that *Whether Man be thus, or otherwise constituted, What is the inward*

SERM. is momentary love; if there be any such thing as the paternal or filial Affections; if there be any Affection in Humane Nature, the Object and End of which is the Good of another; this is itself Benevolence, or the Love of another. Be it ever so short, be it in ever so low a Degree, or ever so unhappily confined; it proves the Assertion, and

*inward Frame in this particular*, is a mere Question of Fact or natural History, not proveable immediately by Reason. It is therefore to be judged of and determined in the same way other Facts or Matters of Natural History are: by appealing to the external Senses, or inward Perceptions, respectively, as the Matter under Consideration is cognizable by one or the other: By arguing from acknowledged Facts and Actions; for a great Number of Actions in the same Kind, in different Circumstances, and respecting different Objects, will prove, to a Certainty, what Principles they do not, and, to the greatest Probability, what Principles they do proceed from: And lastly, by the Testimony of Mankind. Now that there is some Degree of Benevolence amongst Men, may be as strongly and plainly proved in all these Ways, as it could possibly be proved, supposing there was this Affection in our Nature. And should any one think fit to assert, that Resentment in the Mind of Man was absolutely nothing but reasonable Concern for our own Safety, the Falsity of this, and what is the real Nature of that Passion, could be shewn in no other Ways than those in which it may be shewn, that there is such a thing in *some Degree as real Good-will in Man towards Man*. It is sufficient that the Seeds of it be implanted in our Nature by God. There is, it is owned, much left for us to do upon our own Heart and Temper; to cultivate, to improve, to call it forth, to exercise it in a steady, uniform Manner. This is our Work: This is Virtue and Religion.

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and points out what we were designed for, SERM. as really as though it were in a higher Degree and more extensive. I must however remind you that though Benevolence and Self-love are different; though the former tends most directly to publick Good, and the latter to private: Yet they are so perfectly coincident, that the greatest Satisfaction to ourselves, depend upon our having Benevolence in a due Degree; and that Self-love is one chief Security of our right Behaviour towards Society. It may be added, that their mutual coinciding, so that we can scarce promote one without the other, is equally a Proof that we were made for both.

Secondly, THIS will further appear, from observing that the *several Passions* and *Affections*, which are distinct \* both from Benevolence

\* Every Body makes a Distinction between Self-love, and the several particular Passions, Appetites, and Affections; and yet they are often confounded again. That they are totally different, will be seen by any one who will distinguish between the Passions and Appetites *themselves*, and *endeavouring* after the Means of their Gratification. Consider the Appetite of Hunger, and the Desire of Esteem: These being the Occasion both of Pleasure and Pain, the cooleſt *Self-love*, as well as the Appetites and Passions *themselves*, may put us upon making Use of the proper Methods of obtaining that Pleasure, and avoiding that

## A SERMON

SER. nevolence and Self-love, do in general con-

I. tribute and lead us to *publick* Good as really  
as to *private*. It might be thought too mi-  
nute and particular, and would carry us too  
great a length, to distinguish between and  
compare together the several Passions or  
Appetites distinct from Benevolence, whose  
primary

that Pain ; but the *Feeling themselves*, the Pain of Hunger and  
Shame, and the Delight from Esteem, are no more Self-love  
than they are any thing in the World. Though a Man hated  
himself, he would as much feel the Pain of Hunger as he  
would that of the Gout : And it is plainly supposeable there  
may be Creatures with Self-love in them to the highest  
Degree, who may be quite insensible and indifferent (as Men  
in some Cases are) to the Contempt and Esteem of those, upon  
whom their Happiness does not in some further Respects  
depend. And as Self-love and the several particular Passions  
and Appetites are in themselves totally different ; so, that some  
Actions proceed from one, and some from the other, will be  
manifest to any who will observe the two following very  
supposeable Cases. One Man rushes upon certain Ruin for the  
Gratification of a present Desire : No Body will call the  
Principle of this Action Self-love. Suppose another Man to  
go through some laborious Work upon Promise of a great  
Reward, without any distinct Knowledge what the Reward  
will be : This Course of Action cannot be ascribed to any  
particular Passion. The former of these Actions is plainly to  
be imputed to some particular Passion or Affection, the  
latter as plainly to the general Affection or Principle of Self-  
love. That there are some particular Pursuits or Actions con-  
cerning which we cannot determine how far they are owing  
to one, and how far to the other, proceeds from this, that  
the two Principles are frequently mixed together, and run up  
into each other. This Distinction is further explained in the  
Eleventh Sermon.

primary Use and Intention is the Security SERM.  
and Good of Society ; and the Passions di- I.  
stinct from Self-love, whose primary In-  
tention and Design is the Security and Good  
of the Individual \*. It is enough to the pre-  
sent Argument, that Desire of Esteem from  
others, Contempt and Esteem of them, Love  
of Society as distinct from Affection to the  
Good of it, Indignation against successful  
Vice, that these are publick Affections or  
Passions ; have an immediate respect to  
others, naturally lead us to regulate our Be-  
haviour in such a Manner as will be of Ser-  
vice to our Fellow-Creatures. If any or all  
of these may be considered likewise as pri-  
vate Affections, as tending to private Good ;  
this does not hinder them from being pub-  
lick

\* If any desire to see this Distinction and Comparison made  
in a particular Instance, the Appetite and Passion now men-  
tioned may serve for one. Hunger is to be considered as a pri-  
vate Appetite ; because the End for which it was given us is  
the Preservation of the Individual. Desire of Esteem is a pub-  
lick Passion ; because the End for which it was given us is to  
regulate our Behaviour towards Society. The Respect which  
This has to private Good is as remote, as the Respect That has  
to publick Good: And the Appetite is no more Self-love,  
than the Passion is Benevolence. The Object and End of the  
former is merely Food ; the Object and End of the latter is  
merely Esteem: But the latter can no more be gratified, with-  
out contributing to the Good of Society ; than the former  
can be gratified, without contributing to the Preservation of  
the Individual.

SERM. tick Affections too, or destroy the good Influence of them upon Society, and their Tendency to publick Good. It may be added, that as Persons without any Conviction from Reason of the desirableness of Life, would yet of course preserve it merely from the Appetite of Hunger; so by acting merely from Regard (suppose) to Reputation, without any Consideration of the Good of others, Men often contribute to publick Good. In both these Instances they are plainly Instruments in the Hands of another, in the Hands of Providence, to carry on Ends, the Preservation of the Individual and Good of Society, which they themselves have not in their View or Intention. The Sum is, Men have various Appetites, Passions, and particular Affections, quite distinct both from Self-love, and from Benevolence: All of these have a Tendency to promote both publick and private Good, and may be considered as respecting others and ourselves equally and in common: But some of them seem most immediately to respect others, or tend to publick Good; others of them most immediately to respect Self, or tend to private Good: As the former are not Benevolence, so the latter are not

not Self-love: Neither Sort are Instances of SERM. our Love either to ourselves or others; but only Instances of our Maker's Care and Love both of the Individual and the Species, and Proofs that he intended we should be Instruments of Good to each other, as well as that we should be so to ourselves.

Thirdly, THERE is a Principle of Reflection in Men, by which they distinguish between, approve and disapprove their own Actions. We are plainly constituted such sort of creatures as to reflect upon our own Nature. The Mind can take a View of what passes within itself, its Propensions, Aversions, Passions, Affections, as respecting such Objects, and in such Degrees; and of the several Actions consequent there-upon. In this Survey it approves of one, disapproves of another, and towards a third is affected in neither of these ways, but is quite indifferent. This Principle in Man, by which he approves or disapproves his Heart, Temper, and Actions, is Conscience; for this is the strict Sense of the Word, though sometimes it is used so as to take in more. And that this Faculty tends to restrain Men from doing Mischief to each other, and leads them to do good, is too manifest to need

S E R M. need being insisted upon. Thus a Parent

I. has the Affection of Love to his Children :

~~ This leads him to take care of, to educate, to make due Provision for them ; the natural Affection leads to this : But the reflection that it is his proper Business, what belongs to him, that it is right and commendable so to do ; this added to the Affection, becomes a much more settled Principle, and carries him on through more Labour and Difficulties for the sake of his Children, than he would undergo from that Affection, alone ; if he thought it, and the Course of Action it led to, either indifferent or criminal. This indeed is impossible, to do that which is good and not to approve of it ; for which reason they are frequently not considered as distinct, though they really are : For Men often approve of the Actions of others, which they will not imitate, and likewise do that which they approve not. It cannot possibly be denied, that there is this Principle of Reflection or Conscience in Humane Nature. Suppose a Man to relieve an innocent Person in great Distress ; suppose the same Man afterwards, in the Fury of Anger, to do the greatest Mischief to a Person who had given no just Cause of Offence ;

fence: to aggravate the Injury, add the Circumstances of former Friendship, and Obligation from the injured Person; let the Man who is supposed to have done these two different Actions, coolly reflect upon them afterwards, without regard to their Consequences to himself: To assert that any common Man would be affected in the same Way towards these different Actions, that he would make no Distinction between them, but approve or disapprove them equally, is too glaring a Falsity to need being confuted. There is therefore this Principle of Reflection or Conscience in Mankind. It is needless to compare the Respect it has to private Good, with the Respect it has to publick; since it plainly tends as much to the latter as to the former, and is commonly thought to tend chiefly to the latter. This Faculty is now mentioned merely as another Part in the inward Frame of Man, pointing out to us in some Degree what we are intended for, and as what will naturally and of course have some Influence. The particular Place assigned to it by Nature, what Authority it has, and how great Influence it ought to have, shall be hereafter considered.

SER.M. FROM this Comparison of Benevolence  
I and Self-love, of our publick and private  
Affections, of the Courses of Life they lead  
to, and of the Principle of Reflection or  
Conscience as respecting each of them, it  
is as manifest, that *we were made for So-  
ciety, and to promote the Happiness of it;*  
*as that we were intended to take Care of  
our own Life, and Health, and private  
Good.*

AND from this whole Review must be  
given a different Draught of Humane Na-  
ture from what we are often presented with.  
Mankind are by Nature so closely united,  
there is such a Correspondence between the  
inward sensations of one Man and those of  
another, that Disgrace is as much avoided  
as bodily Pain, and to be the Object of  
Esteem and Love as much desired as any  
external Goods: And in many particular  
Cases, Persons are carried on to do good to  
others, as the End their Affection tends to  
and rests in; and manifest that they find  
real Satisfaction and Enjoyment in this  
Course of Behaviour. There is such a na-  
tural Principle of Attraction in Man to-  
wards Man, that having trod the same Tract  
of Land, having breathed in the same Cli-  
mate,

mate, barely having been born in the same artificial District or Division, becomes the Occasion of contracting Acquaintances and Familiarities many Years after: For any thing may serve the Purpose. Thus Relations merely nominal are sought and invented, not by Governours, but by the lowest of the People; which are found sufficient to hold Mankind together in little Fraternities and Copartnerships: Weak Ties indeed, and what may afford Fund enough for Redicule, if they are absurdly considered as the real Principles of that Union: But they are in Truth merely the Occasions, as any thing may be of any thing, upon which our Nature carries us on according to its own previous Bent and Bias; which occasions therefore would be nothing at all, were there not this prior Disposition and Bias of Nature. Men are so much one Body, that in a peculiar Manner they feel for each other, Shame, sudden Danger, Resentment, Honour, Prosperity, Distress; one or another, or all of these, from the social Nature in general, from Benevolence, upon the Occasion of natural Relation, Acquaintance, Protection, Dependance; each of these being distinct Cements of Society. And therefore to have

SERMON. no restraint from, no regard to others in

I. our Behaviour, is the speculative Absurdity  
of considering ourselves as single and independent, as having nothing in our Nature which has respect to our Fellow-Creatures, reduced to Action and Practice. And this is the same Absurdity, as to suppose a Hand, or any part to have no natural Respect to any other, or to the whole Body.

But allowing all this, it may be asked, "Has not Man Dispositions and Principles within which lead him to do Evil to others, as well as to do Good? Whence comes the many Miseries else, which Men are the Authors and Instruments of to each other?" These Questions, so far as they relate to the foregoing Discourse, may be answered by asking, Has not Man also Dispositions and Principles within, which lead him to do Evil to himself, as well as good? Whence come the many Miseries else, Sickness, Pain and Death, which Men are Instruments and Authors of to themselves?

IT may be thought more easie to answer one of these Questions than the other, but the answer to both is really the same; that Mankind have ungoverned Passions

which they will gratifie at any Rate, as well S E R M. to the Injury of others, as in Contradic- I. tion to known private Interest: But that as there is no such thing as Self-hatred, so neither is there any such thing as Ill-will in one Man towards another, Emulation and Resentment being away; whereas there is plainly Benevolence or Good-will: There is no such thing as Love of Injustice, Oppression, Treachery, Ingratitude; but only eager Desires after such and such external Goods; which, according to a very antient Observation, the most abandoned would choose to obtain by innocent Means, if they were as easy, and as effectual to their End: That even Emulation and Resentment, by any one who will consider what these Passions really are in Nature \*, will be found nothing to the Purpose of this Ob-

C 2 jection:

\* Emulation is merely the Desire and Hope of Equality with, or Superiority over others, with whom we compare ourselves. There does not appear to be any *other Grief* in the natural Passion, but only *that Want* which is implied in Desire. However this may be so strong as to be the Occasion of great *Grief*. To desire the attainment of this Equality or Superiority by the *particular Means* of Others, being brought down to our own Level, or below it, is, I think, the distinct Notion of Envy From whence it is easy to see, that the real End, which the natural Passion Emulation, and which the unlawful

S E R M. jection: And that the Principles and Passions I. in the Mind of Man, which are distinct both from Self-love and Benevolence, primarily and most directly lead to right Behaviour with regard to Others as well as Himself, and only secondarily and accidentally to what is Evil. Thus, though Men to avoid the shame of one Villany, are sometimes guilty of a greater, yet it is easy to see, that the original tendency of Shame is to prevent the doing of shameful Actions; and its leading Men to conceal such Actions when done, is only in consequence of their being done; *i. e.* of the Passions not having answered its first End.

I F it be said, that there are persons in the World, who are in great Measure without the natural Affections towards their Fellow-Creatures: There are likewise Instances of Persons without the common natural Affections to themselves: But the Nature of Man is not to be judged of by either of these, but by what appears in the common World, in the Bulk of Mankind.

## I A M

lawful one Envy aims at, is exactly the same; namely, that Equality or Superiority: And consequently, that to do Mischief is not the End of Envy, but merely the Means it makes use of to attain its End. As to Resentment, see the Eighth Sermon.

I AM afraid it would be thought very S E R M. strange, if to confirm the Truth of this Ac- I. count of Humane Nature, and make out the Justness of the foregoing Comparison, it should be added, that from what appears, Men in Fact as much as often contradict that *Part* of their Nature which respects *Self*, and which leads them to their *own private* Good and Happiness; as they contradict that *Part* of it which respects *Society*, and tends to *publick* Good: That there are as few Persons, who attain the greatest Satisfaction and Enjoyment which they might attain in the present World; as who do the greatest Good to others which they might do: Nay, that there are as few who can be said really and in earnest to aim at one, as at the other. Take a Survey of Mankind: The World in general, the Good and Bad, almost without Exception, equally are agreed, that were Religion out of the Case, the Happiness of the present Life would consist in a Manner wholly in Riches, Honours, sensual Gratifications; insomuch that one scarce hears a Reflection made upon Prudence, Life, Conduct, but upon this Supposition. Yet on the contrary, that Persons in the greatest Affluence of Fortune are no

S E R M. happier than such as have only a Competency; that the Cares and Disappointments of Ambition for the most Part far exceed the Satisfaction of it; as also the miserable Intervals of Intemperance and Excess, and the many untimely Deaths occasioned by a dissolute Course of Life: These Things are all seen, acknowledged, by every one acknowledged; but are thought no Objections against, though they expressly contradict, this universal Principle, that the Happiness of the present Life, consists in one or other of them.

Whence is all this Absurdity and Contradiction? Is not the middle Way obvious? Can any thing be more manifest, than that the Happiness of Life consists in These possessed and enjoyed only to a certain Degree; that to pursue them beyond this Degree, is always attended with more Inconvenience than Advantage, to a Man's self, and often with extreme Misery and Unhappiness. Whence then, I say, is all this Absurdity and Contradiction? Is it really the Result of Consideration in Mankind, how they may become most easy to themselves, most free from Care, and enjoy the chief Happiness attainable in this World? Or is it not manifestly owing either to this, that they have not

not cool and reasonable Concern enough SERM. for themselves to consider wherein their chief Happiness in the present Life consists ; or else, if they do consider it, that they will not act conformably to what is the Result of that Consideration : *i. e.* reasonable Concern for themselves, or cool Self-love is prevailed over by Passion and Appetite. So that from what appears, there is no Ground to assert that those Principles in the Nature of Man, which most directly lead to promote the Good of our Fellow-Creatures, are more generally or in a greater Degree violated, than those, which most directly lead us to promote our own private Good and Happiness.

THE Sum of the whole is plainly this. The Nature of Man considered in his single Capacity, and with respect only to the present World, is adapted and leads him to attain the greatest Happiness he can for himself in the present World. The Nature of Man considered in his publick or social Capacity leads him to a right Behaviour in Society, to that Course of Life which we call Virtue. Men follow or obey their Nature in both these Capacities and Respects to a certain Degree, but not entirely : Their Actions

SERMONS do not come up to the whole of what

I. their Nature leads them to in either of these Capacities or Respects: and they often violate their Nature in both, *i. e.* As they neglect the Duties they owe to their Fellow-Creatures, to which their Nature leads them; and are injurious, to which their Nature is abhorrent: So there is a manifest Negligence in Men of their real Happiness or Interest in the present World, when that Interest is inconsistent with a present Gratification; for the sake of which they negligently, nay, even knowingly are the Authors and Instruments of their own Misery and Ruin. Thus they are as often unjust to themselves as to others, and for the most Part are equally so to both by the same Actions.

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## SERMON II, III.

### *Upon Humane Nature.*

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R O M. ii. 14.

*For when the Gentiles which have not the Law; do by Nature the Things contained in the Law, these having not the Law, are a Law unto themselves.*

**A**S speculative Truth admits of different Kinds of Proof, so likewise Moral Obligations may be shewn by different Methods. If the real Nature of any Creature leads him and is adapted to such and such Purposes only, or more than to any other; this is a Reason to believe the Author of that Nature intended it for those Purposes. Thus there is no Doubt the Eye was intended for us to see with. And the more complex any Constitution is,

SERM.  
II.

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SER.M. is, and the greater Variety of Parts there are  
II. which thus tend to some one End, the  
stronger is the Proof that such End was de-  
signed. However, when the inward Frame  
of Man is considered as any Guide in Mo-  
rals, the utmost Caution must be used that  
none make Peculiarities in their own Tem-  
per, or any thing which is the Effect of  
particular Customs, though observable in  
several, the Standard of what is common  
to the Species; and above all, that the high-  
est Principle be not forgot or excluded,  
That to which belongs the Adjustment and  
Correction of all other inward Movements  
and Affections: Which Principle will of  
Course have some Influence, but which be-  
ing in Nature supreme, as shall now be  
shown, ought to preside over and govern  
all the rest. The Difficulty of rightly ob-  
serving the two former Cautions; the Ap-  
pearance there is of some small Diversity  
amongst Mankind with respect to this Fa-  
culty, with respect to their natural Sense of  
moral Good and Evil; and the Attention ne-  
cessary to survey with any Exactness what  
passes within, have occasioned that it is not so  
much agreed what is the Standard of the  
internal Nature of Man, as of his external  
Form.

Form. Neither is this last exactly settled. SERM. Yet we understand one another when we speak of the Shape of a Humane Body: So likewise we do when we speak of the Heart and inward Principles, how far soever the Standard is from being exact or precisely fixt. There is therefore Ground for an Attempt of shewing Men to themselves, of shewing them what Course of Life and Behaviour their real Nature points out and would lead them to. Now Obligations of Virtue shown, and Motives to the Practice of it enforced, from a Review of the Nature of Man, are to be considered as an Appeal to each particular Person's Heart and natural Conscience: As the external Senses are appealed to for the Proof of things cognizable by them. Since then our inward Feelings, and the Perceptions we receive from our external Senses are equally real; to argue from the former to Life and Conduct is as little liable to Exception, as to argue from the latter to absolute speculative Truth. A Man can as little doubt whether his Eyes were given him to see with, as he can doubt of the Truth of the Science of *Opticks*, deduced from ocular Experiments. And allowing the inward Feeling, Shame; a Man can

SERM. can as little doubt whether it was given him  
II. to prevent his doing shameful Actions, as he  
can doubt whether his Eyes were given him  
to guide his Steps. And as to these inward  
Feelings themselves; that they are real, that  
Man has in his Nature Passions and Affec-  
tions, can no more be questioned, than that  
he has external Senses. Neither can the  
former be wholly mistaken; though to a  
certain Degree liable to greater Mistakes than  
the latter.

T H E R E can be no doubt but that several  
Propensions or Instincts, several Principles in  
the Heart of Man, carry him to Society, and  
to contribute to the Happiness of it, in a  
Sense and a Manner in which no inward Prin-  
ciple leads him to Evil. These Principles,  
Propensions or Instincts which lead him to  
do Good, are approved of by a certain Fa-  
culty within, quite distinct from these Pro-  
pensions themselves. All this hath been fully  
made out in the foregoing Discourse.

B U T it may be said, " What is all this,  
" though true, to the Purpose of Virtue and  
" Religion? These require, not only that  
" we do Good to others when we are led  
" this Way, by Benevolence or Reflection,  
" happening to be stronger than other Prin-  
" ciples,

“ ciples, Passions, or Appetites; but like- SERM.  
“ wise that the *whole* Character be formed II.  
“ upon Thought and Reflection; that *every* ~~two~~  
“ Action be directed by some determinate  
“ Rule, some other Rule than the Strength  
“ and Prevalency of any Principle or  
“ Passion. What Sign is there in our Na-  
“ ture (for the Inquiry is only about what  
“ is to be collected from thence) that this  
“ was intended by its Author? Or how  
“ does so various and fickle a Temper as  
“ that of Man appear adapted thereto? It  
“ may indeed be absurd and unnatural for  
“ Men to act without any Reflection; nay,  
“ without regard to that particular Kind of  
“ Reflection which you call Conscience;  
“ because this does belong to our Nature.  
“ For as there never was a Man but who  
“ approved one Place, Prospect, Building,  
“ before another: So it does not appear  
“ that there ever was a Man who would  
“ not have approved an Action of Huma-  
“ nity rather than of Cruelty; Interest and  
“ Passion being quite out of the Case. But  
“ Interest and Passion do come in, and are  
“ often too strong for and prevail over Re-  
“ flection and Conscience. Now as Brutes  
“ have various Instincts, by which they are  
“ carried

S E R M. " carried on to the End the Author of their  
II. " Nature intended them for: Is not Man  
~~ " in the same Condition; with this Diffe-  
" rence only, that to his Instincts (*i. e.* Ap-  
" petites and Passions) is added the Princi-  
" ple of Reflection or Conscience? And  
" as Brutes act agreeably to their Nature, in  
" following that Principle or particular In-  
" stinct which for the present is strongest  
" in them: Does not Man likewise act a-  
" greeably to his Nature, or obey the Law  
" of his Creation, by following that Prin-  
" ciple, be it Passion or Conscience, which  
" for the present happens to be strongest in  
" him? Thus different Men are by their  
" particular Nature hurried on to pursue  
" Honour, or Riches, or Pleasure: There  
" are also Persons whose temper leads them  
" in an uncommon Degree to Kindness,  
" Compassion, doing Good to their Fellow-  
" Creatures: As there are others who are  
" given to suspend their Judgment, to weigh  
" and consider Things, and to act upon  
" Thought and Reflection. Let every one  
" then quietly follow his Nature; as Passion,  
" Reflection, Appetite, the several Parts  
" of it, happen to be strongest: But let  
" not the Man of Virtue take upon him  
" to

“ to blame the Ambitious, the Covetous, S E R M.  
“ the Dissolute; since these equally with II.  
“ him obey and follow their Nature. Thus,  
“ as in some Cases, we follow our Nature in  
“ doing the Works *contained in the Law*, so  
“ in other Cases we follow Nature in doing  
“ contrary.”

Now all this licentious Talk intirely goes upon a Supposition, that Men follow their Nature in the same Sense, in violating the known Rules of Justice and Honesty for the sake of a present Gratification, as they do in following those Rules when they have no temptation to the contrary. And if this were true, that could not be so which St Paul asserts, that Men are *by Nature a Law to themselves*. If by following Nature were meant only acting as we please, it would indeed be ridiculous to speak of Nature as any Guide in Morals: Nay the very mention of deviating from Nature would be absurd; and the mention of following it, when spoken by way of Distinction, would absolutely have no Meaning. For did ever any one act otherwise than as he pleased? And yet the Antients speak of deviating from Nature as Vice; and of following Nature so much as a Distinction, that according to them

S E R M. them the Perfection of Virtue consists there-  
H. in. So that Language itself should teach  
~~ People another Sense to the Words *following Nature*, than barely acting as we please. Let it however be observed, that though the Words *Humanie Nature* are to be explained, yet the real Question of this Discourse is not concerning the Meaning of Words, any other than as the Explanation of them may be needful to make out and explain the Assertion, that *every Man is naturally a Law to himself*, that *every one may find within himself, the Rule of Right, and Obligations to follow it*. This St. Paul affirms in the Words of the Text, and this the foregoing Objection really denies by seeming to allow it. And the Objection will be fully answered, and the Text before us explained, by observing that *Nature* is considered in different Views, and the Word used in different Senses; and by shewing in what View it is considered, and in what sense the Word is used, when intended to express and signify that which is the Guide of Life, that by which Men are a Law to themselves. I say, the Explanation of the Term will be sufficient, because from thence it will appear, that in some

some Senses of the Word, *Nature* cannot be S E R M. but that in another Sense it manifestly is, a II. Law to us.

I. By Nature is often meant no more than some Principle in Man, without regard either to the Kind or Degree of it. Thus the Passion of Anger, and the Affection of Parents to their Children, would be called equally *natural*. And as the same Person hath often contrary Principles, which at the same Time draw contrary Ways, he may by the same Action both follow and contradict his Nature in this Sense of the Word; he may follow one Passion and contradict another.

II. *Nature* is frequently spoken of as consisting in those Passions which are strongest, and most influence the Actions; which being vicious ones, Mankind is in this Sense naturally vicious, or vicious by Nature. Thus St Paul says of the Gentiles, *who were dead in Trespasses and Sins, and walked according to the Spirit of Disobedience*, that *they were by Nature the Children of Wrath* \*. They could be no otherwise *Children of Wrath* by Nature, than they were vicious by Nature.

D

H E R E

\* Ephes. ii. 3.

SER. M. HERE then are two different Senses of  
II. the Word *Nature*, in neither of which Men  
can at all be said to be a Law to themselves.  
They are mentioned only to be excluded; to  
prevent their being confounded, as the latter  
is in the Objection, with another Sense of it,  
which is now to be enquired after, and ex-  
plained.

III. THE Apostle asserts, that the *Gentiles do by NATURE the Things contained in the Law*. Nature is indeed here put by way of Distinction from Revelation, but yet it is not a mere Negative. He intends to express more than that by which they *did not*, that by which they *did* the Works of the Law; namely, by *Nature*. It is plain the Meaning of the Word is not the same in this Passage as in the former, where it is spoken of as Evil; for in this latter it is spoken of as Good; as that by which they acted, or might have acted virtuously. What that is in Man by which he is naturally a *Law to himself*, is explained in the following Words: *Which shew the Work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Consciences also bearing Witness, and their Thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.* If there be a Dis-  
tinction

tinction to be made between the *Works* SERM. written in their *Hearts*, and the *Witness* II. of *Conscience*; by the former must be meant the natural Disposition to kindness and Compassion, to do what is of good Report, to which this Apostle often refers: That Part of the Nature of Man, treated of in the foregoing Discourse, which with very little Reflection and of course leads him to Society, and by Means of which he naturally acts a just and good Part in it, unless other Passions or Interest lead him astray. Yet since other Passions, and Regards to private Interest, which lead us (though indirectly, yet they lead us) astray, are themselves in a Degree equally natural, and often most prevalent; and since we have no Method of seeing the particular Degrees in which one or the other is placed in us by Nature; it is plain the former, considered meerly as natural, good and right as they are, can no more be a Law to us than the latter. But there is a superior Principle of Reflection or Conscience in every Man, which distinguishes between the internal Principles of his Heart, as well as his external Actions: Which passes Judgment upon himself and them; pronounces determinately

SER. ly some Actions to be in themselves just, right, good; others to be in themselves evil, wrong, unjust: Which, without being consulted, without being advised with, magisterially exerts itself, and approves or condemns Him the doer of them accordingly: And which, if not forcibly stopp'd, naturally and always of course goes on to anticipate a higher and more effectual Sentence, which shall hereafter second and affirm its own. But this Part of the Office of Conscience is beyond my present Design explicitely to consider. It is by this Faculty, natural to Man, that he is a moral Agent, that he is a Law to himself: But this Faculty, I say, not to be considered meerly as a Principle in his Heart, which is to have some Influence as well as others; but considered as a Faculty in Kind and in Nature supreme over all others, and which bears its own Authority of being so.

THIS *Prerogative*, this *natural Supremacy*, of the Faculty which surveys, approves or disapproves the several Affections of our Mind, and Actions of our Lives, being that by which Men are a *Law to themselves*, their Conformity or Disobedience to which Law of our Nature renders their Actions,

## Upon *Humane Nature.* 37

Actions, in the highest and most proper SERM. Sense, natural or unnatural; it is fit it be further explained to you: And I hope it will be so, if you will attend to the following Reflections.

MAN may act according to that Principle or Inclination which for the present happens to be strongest, and yet act in a Way disproportionate to, and violate his real proper Nature. Suppose a Brute Creature by any Bait to be allured into a Snare, by which he is destroyed. He plainly followed the Bent of his Nature, leading him to gratify his Appetite: There is an entire Correspondence between his whole Nature and such an Action: Such Action therefore is natural. But suppose a Man, foreseeing the same Danger of certain Ruin, should rush into it for the sake of a present Gratification; he in this Instance would follow his strongest Desire, as did the brute Creature: But there would be as manifest a Disproportion, between the Nature of a Man and such an Action, as between the meanest Work of Art and the Skill of the greatest Master in that Art: Which Disproportion arises, not from considering the Action singly in *itself*, or in its *Consequences*; but from *Comparison* of

SERM. it with the Nature of the Agent. And since  
II. such an Action is utterly disproportionate to  
the Nature of Man, it is in the strictest and  
most proper Sense unnatural ; this Word ex-  
pressing that Disproportion. Therefore instead  
of the Words *Disproportionate to his Nature*,  
the Word, *Unnatural*, may now be put ;  
this being more familiar to us : But let it be  
observed, that it stands for the same thing  
precisely.

Now what is it which renders such a  
rash Action unnatural ? Is it that he went a-  
gainst the Principle of reasonable and cool  
Self-love, considered *merely* as a Part of his  
Nature ? No : For if he had acted the con-  
trary Way, he would equally have gone a-  
gainst a Principle, or Part of his Nature,  
namely, Passion or Appetite. But to deny  
a present Appetite, from Foresight that the  
Gratification of it would end in immediate  
Ruin or extreme Misery, is by no Means an  
unnatural Action : Whereas to contradict or  
go against cool Self-Love for the sake of such  
Gratification, is so in the Instance before us.  
Such an Action then being unnatural ; and  
its being so not arising from a Man's going  
against a Principle or Desire barely, nor in  
going against that Principle or Desire which  
happens

happens for the present to be strongest; it necessarily follows, that there must be some other Difference or Distinction to be made between these two Principles, Passion and cool Self-love, than what I have yet taken Notice of. And this difference, not being a Difference in Strength or Degree, I call a Difference in *Nature* and in *Kind*. And since, in the Instance still before us, if Passion prevails over Self-love, the consequent Action is unnatural; but if Self-love prevails over Passion, the Action is natural: It is manifest that Self-love is in Humane Nature a superior Principle to Passion. This may be contradicted without violating that Nature; but the former cannot. So that, if we will act conformably to the Oeconomy of Man's Nature, reasonable Self-love must govern. Thus, without particular consideration of Conscience, we may have a clear Conception of the *superior Nature* of one inward Principle to another; and see that there really is this natural Superiority, quite distinct from Degrees of Strength and Prevalency.

LET us now take a View of the Nature of Man, as consisting partly of various Appetites, Passions, Affections, and partly of

SERM. the Principle of Reflection or Conscience;

II. leaving quite out all Consideration of the  
different Degrees of Strength, in which  
either of them prevail, and it will further ap-  
pear that there is this natural Superiority of  
one inward Principle to another, and that it  
is even Part of the Idea of Reflection or  
Conscience.

PASSION or Appetite implies a direct  
simple Tendency towards such and such  
Objects, without Distinction of the Means by  
which they are to be obtained. Consequent-  
ly 'twill often happen there will be a De-  
sire of particular Objects, in Cases where  
they cannot be obtained without manifest  
Injury to others. Reflection or Conscience  
comes in, and disapproves the Pursuit of  
them in these Circumstances; but the De-  
sire remains. Which is to be obeyed, Ap-  
petite or Reflection? Cannot this Question  
be answered, from the Oeconomy and Con-  
stitution of Humane Nature meerly, with-  
out saying which is strongest? Or need this  
at all come into Consideration? Would  
not the Question be *intelligibly* and fully  
answered by saying, that the Principle of  
Reflection or Conscience being compared  
with the various Appetites, Passions, and  
Affections

## Upon Humane Nature. 41

Affections in Men, the former is manifestly SERM.  
superior and chief, without regard to II.  
Strength? And how often soever the latter ~~happens~~ to prevail, it is meer *Usurpation*:  
The former remains in Nature and in Kind  
its Superiour; and every Instance of such  
Prevalence of the latter is an Instance of  
breaking in upon and Violation of the Con-  
stitution of Man.

ALL this is no more than the Distinc-  
tion, which every Body is acquainted with,  
between *meer Power* and *Authority*: Only  
instead of being intended to express the  
Difference between what is possible, and  
what is lawful in Civil Government; here  
it has been shewn applicable to the several  
Principles in the Mind of Man. Thus that  
Principle, by which we survey, and either  
approve or disapprove our own Heart,  
Temper and Actions, is not only to be  
considered as what is in its turn to have  
some Influence; which may be said of e-  
very Passion, of the lowest Appetites:  
But likewise as being superior; as from its  
very Nature manifestly claiming Superiority  
over all others: insomuch that you cannot  
form a Notion of this Faculty, Conscience,  
without taking in Judgement, Direction,  
Super-

S E R M. Superintendency. This is a constituent Part II. of the Idea, that is, of the Faculty itself:   
~~~ And, to preside and govern, from the very Oeconomy and Constitution of Man, belongs to it. Had it Strength, as it had Right; had it Power, as it had manifest Authority, it would absolutely govern the Word.

THIS gives us a further View of the Nature of Man; shews us what Course of Life we were made for: Not only that our real Nature leads us to be influenced in some Degree by Reflection and Conscience; but likewise in what Degree we are to be influenced by it, if we will fall in with, and act agreeably to the Constitution of our Nature: That this Faculty was placed within to be our proper Governour; to direct and regulate all under Principles, Passions, and Motives of Action. This is its Right and Office: Thus sacred is its Authority. And how often soever Men violate and rebelliously refuse to submit to it, for supposed Interest which they cannot otherwise obtain, or for the sake of Passion which they cannot otherwise gratify; this makes no Alteration as to the *natural Right and Office* of Conscience.

LET us now turn this whole Matter another way, and suppose there was no such thing at all as this natural Supremacy of Conscience; that there was no Distinction to be made between one inward Principle and another, but only that of Strength; and see what would be the Consequence.

CONSIDER then what is the Latitude and Compass of the Actions of Man with regard to Himself; his Fellow-Creatures and the Supreme Being? What are their Bounds, besides that of our natural Power? With respect to the two first, they are plainly no other than these: No Man seeks Misery as such for himself; and No one unprovoked does Mischief to Another for its own sake. For in every Degree within these Bounds, Mankind knowingly from Passion or Wantonness bring Ruin and Misery upon themselves and others. And Impiety and Prophaneness, I mean, what every one would call so who believes the Being of God, have absolutely no Bounds at all. Men blaspheme the Author of Nature, formally and in Words renounce their Allegiance to their Creator. Put an Instance then with respect to any one of these three. Though we should suppose profane Swearing, and in general that

SERM.  
II.

SERMON. that Kind of Impiety now mentioned, to  
II. mean nothing, yet it implies wanton Disre-  
gard and Irreverence towards an Infinite  
Being, our Creator; and is this as suitable  
to the Nature of Man, as Reverence and  
dutiful Submission of Heart towards that  
Almighty Being? Or suppose a Man guilty  
of Parricide, with all the Circumstances of  
Cruelty which such an Action can admit  
of. This Action is done in Consequence  
of its Principle being for the present strongest:  
And if there be no Difference between in-  
ward Principles, but only that of Strength;  
the Strength being given, you have the  
whole Nature of the Man given, so far as it  
relates to this Matter. The Action plainly  
corresponds to the Principle, the Principle  
being in that Degree of Strength it was: It  
therefore corresponds to the whole Nature  
of the Man. Upon comparing the Action  
and the whole Nature, there arises no Dis-  
proportion, there appears no unsuitableness  
between them. Thus the *Murder of a Fa-*  
*ther* and the *Nature of Man* correspond to  
each other, as the same Nature and an Act  
of filial Duty. If there be no Difference be-  
tween inward Principles, but only that of  
Strength; we can make no Distinction be-  
tween

tween these two Actions, considered as the SERM. Actions of such a Creature; but in our II. coolest Hours must approve or disapprove ~~the~~ them equally: Than which nothing can be reduced to a greater Absurdity.

THE natural Supremacy of Reflection or SERM. Conscience being thus established; we may III. from it form a distinct Notion of what is meant by *Humane Nature*, when Virtue is said to consist in following it, and Vice in deviating from it.

As the Idea of a Civil Constitution implies in it united Strength, various Subordinations, under one Direction, that of the supreme Authority; the different Strength of each particular Member of the Society not coming into the Idea; whereas, if you leave out the Subordination, the Union and the one Direction, you destroy and lose it: So Reason, several Appetites, Passions and Affections, prevailing in different Degrees of Strength, is not *that* Idea or Notion of *Humane Nature*; but *that Nature* consists in these several Principles considered as having a natural Respect to each other, in the several Passions being naturally subordinate

SERM. nate to the one superior Principle of Reflection or Conscience. Every Bias, Instinct, Propension within, is a natural Part of our Nature, but not the Whole: Add to these the superior Faculty, whose Office it is to adjust, manage and preside over them, and take in this its natural Superiority, and you compleat the Idea of Humane Nature. And as in Civil Government the Constitution is broken in upon, and violated by Power and Strength prevailing over Authority; so the Constitution of Man is broken in upon and violated by the lower Faculties or Principles within prevailing over that which is in its Nature supreme over them all. Thus, when it is said by antient Writers, that Tortures and Death are not so contrary to Humane Nature as Injustice; by this to be sure, is not meant, that the Aversion to the former in Mankind is less strong and prevalent than their Aversion the latter: But that the former is only contrary to our Nature considered in a partial View, and which takes in only the lowest Part of it, that which we have in common with the Brutes; whereas the latter is contrary to our Nature, considered in a higher Sense, as a System and

and Constitution, contrary to the whole Oe- S E R M.  
conomy of Man\*.

III.

A N D

\* Every Man in his Phisical Nature is one individual single Agent. He has likewise Properties and Principles, each of which may be considered separately, and without Regard to the Respects which they have to each other. Neither of these are the Nature we are taking a View of. But it is the inward Frame of Man considered as a *System* or *Constitution*: Whose several Parts are united, not by a physical Principle of Individuation, but by the Respects they have to each other; the chief of which is the Subjection which the Appetites, Passions, and particular Affections have to the one suprem Principle of Reflection or Conscience. The System or Constitution is formed by and consists in these Respects and this Subjection. Thus the Body is a *System* or *Constitution*: So is a Tree: So is every Machine. Consider all the several Parts of a Tree without the natural Respects they have to each other, and you have not at all the Idea of a Tree; but add these Respects, and this gives you the Idea. The Body may be impaired by Sickness, a Tree may decay, a Machine be out of Order, and yet the System and Constitution of them not totally dissolved. There is plainly somewhat which answers to all this in the moral Constitution of Man. Whoever will consider his own Nature, will see that the several Appetites, Passions, and particular Affections, have different Respects amongst themselves. They are Restraints upon, and are in a Proportion to each other. This Proportion is just and perfect, when all those under Principles are perfectly coincident with Conscience, so far as their Nature permits, and in all Cases under its absolute and intire Direction. The least Excess or Defect, the least Alteration of the due Proportions amongst themselves, or of their Co-incidence with Conscience, though not proceeding into Action, is some Degree of Disorder in the moral Constitution. But Perfection, though plainly intelligible and unsupposeable, was never attained by any Man. If the higher Principle of Reflection maintains its Place, and as much

as

SERM. AND from all these things put together,

III. nothing can be more evident, than that, exclusive of Revelation, Man cannot be considered as a Creature left by his Maker to act at Random, and live at large up to the Extent of his natural Power, as Passion, Humour, Wilfulness, happen to carry him; which is the Condition brute Creatures are in: But that *from his Make, Constitution, or Nature, he is in the strictest and most proper Sense a Law to himself.* He hath the Rule of Right within: What is wanting is only that he honestly attend to it.

THE Inquiries which have been made by Men of Leisure after some general Rule, the Conformity to, or Disagreement from which, should denominate our Actions Good or Evil, are in many Respects of great Service. Yet let any plain honest Man, before he engages in any Course of Action, ask himself, Is this I am going about Right, or is

as it can corrects that Disorder, and hinders it from breaking out into Action, this is all that can be expected in such a Creature as Man. And though the Appetites and Passions have not their exact due Proportion to each other; though they often strive for Mastery with Judgment or Reflection; yet, since the Superiority of this Principle to all others is the chief Respect which forms the Constitution, so far as this Superiority is maintained, the Character, the Man, is good, worthy, virtuous.

is it wrong? Is it Good, or is it Evil? I do SERM. not in the least doubt, but that this Question III. would be answered agreeably to Truth and Virtue, by almost any fair Man in almost any Circumstance. Neither do there appear any Cases which look like Exceptions to this; but those of Superstition, and of Partiality to ourselves. Superstition may perhaps be somewhat of an Exception: But Partiality to ourselves is not; this being itself Dishonesty; For a Man to judge that to be the Equitable, the moderate, the right Part for him to act, which he would see to be hard, unjust, oppressive in another; this is plain Vice, and can proceed only from great Unfairness of Mind.

BUT allowing that Mankind hath the Rule of Right within himself, yet it may be asked, "What Obligations are we under to attend to and follow it?" I answer: It has been proved that Man by his Nature is a Law to himself, without the particular distinct Consideration of the positive Sanctions of that Law; the Rewards and Punishments which we feel, and those which from the Light of Reason we have ground to believe, are annexed to it. The Question then carries its own Answer along with it. Your Obligation

SERM. gation to obey this Law, is its being the  
III. Law of your Nature. That your Consci-  
~ence approves of and attests to such a Course  
of Action, is itself alone an Obligation.  
Conscience does not only offer itself to shew  
us the Way we should walk in, but it like-  
wise carries its own Authority with it, that  
it is our natural Guide; the Guide assigned  
us by the Author of our Nature: It there-  
fore belongs to our Condition of Being, it  
is our Duty to walk in that Path, and follow  
this Guide without looking about to see whe-  
ther we may not possibly forsake them with  
Impunity.

HOWEVER, let us hear what is to be  
said against obeying this Law of our Nature.  
And the Sum is no more than this. "Why  
" should we be concerned about any thing  
" out of and beyond ourselves? If we do  
" find within Ourselves Regards to Others,  
" and Restraints of we know not how many  
" different Kinds; yet these being Em-  
" barassments, and hindering us from going  
" the nearest Way to our own Good, why  
" should we not endeavour to suppress and  
" get over them?"

Thus People go on with Words, which,  
when applied to Humane Nature, and the  
Condition

Condition in which it is placed in this S E R M. World, have really no Meaning. For does not all this Kind of Talk go upon Supposition, that our Happiness in this World consists in somewhat quite distinct from Regard to others; and that it is the Priviledge of Vice to be without Restraint or Confinement? Whereas on the contrary, the Enjoyments, in a Manner all the common Enjoyments of Life, even the Pleasures of Vice, depend upon these Regards of one Kind or another to our Fellow Creatures. Throw off all Regards to others, and we should be quite indifferent to Infamy and to Honour; there could be no such Thing at all as Ambition; and scarce any such thing as Covetousness; for we should likewise be equally indifferent to the Disgrace of Poverty, the several Neglects and Kinds of Contempt which accompany this State; and to the Reputation of Riches, the Regard and Respect they usually procure. Neither is Restraint by any Means peculiar to one Course of Life: But our very nature, exclusive of Conscience, and our Condition lays us under an absolute Necessity of it. We cannot gain any End whatever without being confined to the proper Means, which

SERM. is often the most painful and uneasy Con-  
III. fine-  
~~ present Appetite cannot be gratified without  
such apparent and immediate Ruin and Mi-  
sery, that the most dissolute Man in the  
World chooses to forego the Pleasure, rather  
than endure the Pain.

Is the Meaning then, to indulge those  
Regards to our Fellow-Creatures, and sub-  
mit to those Restraints, which upon the  
whole are attended with more Satisfaction  
than Uneasiness, and get over only those  
which bring more Uneasiness and Incon-  
venience than Satisfaction? “Doubtless this  
“ was our Meaning.” You have changed  
Sides then. Keep to this; be consistent  
with yourselves; and you and the Men of  
Virtue are *in general* perfectly agreed. But  
let us take Care and avoid Mistakes. Let it  
not be taken for granted that the Temper of  
Envy, Rage, Resentment, yields greater De-  
light than Meekness, Forgiveness, Compa-  
sion, and Good-will: Especially when it is  
acknowledged that Rage, Envy, Resent-  
ment, are in themselves meer Misery;  
and the Satisfaction arising from the Indul-  
gence of them is little more than Relief  
from that Misery; whereas the Temper of  
Compassion

Compassion and Benevolence is itself de- SERM.  
lightful; and the Indulgence of it, by doing III.  
Good, affords new positive Delight and En-   
joyment. Let it not be taken for granted,  
that the Satisfaction arising from the Reputa-  
tion of Riches and Power, however ob-  
tained, and from the Respect paid to them,  
is greater than the Satisfaction arising from  
the Reputation of Justice, Honesty, Charity,  
and the Esteem which is universally ac-  
knowledged to be their Due. And if it be  
doubtful which of these Satisfactions is the  
greatest, as there are Persons who think nei-  
ther of them very considerable, yet there  
can be no Doubt concerning Ambition and  
Covetousness, Virtue and a good Mind, con-  
sidered in themselves, and as leading to dif-  
ferent Courses of Life; there can, I say,  
be no doubt, which Temper and which  
Course is attended with most Peace and Tran-  
quility of Mind, which with most Perplex-  
ity, Vexation and Inconvenience. And both  
the Virtues and Vices which have been now  
mentioned, do in a Manner equally imply  
in them Regards of one Kind or another to  
our Fellow-Creatures. And with respect  
to Restraint and Confinement: Whoever  
will consider the Restraints from Fear and

SERM. Shame, the Dissimulation, mean Arts of  
III. Concealment, servile Compliances, one or  
other of which belong to almost every  
Course of Vice, will soon be convinced  
that the Man of Virtue is by no Means upon  
a Disadvantage in this Respect. How many  
Instances are there in which Men feel and  
own and cry aloud under the Chains of  
Vice with which they are enthralled, and  
which yet they will not shake off? How  
many Instances, in which Persons mani-  
festly go through more Pains and Self-denial  
to gratify a vicious Passion, than would have  
been necessary to the Conquest of it? To  
this is to be added, that when Virtue is be-  
come habitual, when the Temper of it is  
acquir'd, what was before Confinement  
ceases to be so, by becoming Choice and De-  
light. Whatever Restraint and Guard upon  
ourselves may be needful to unlearn any un-  
natural Distortion or odd Gesture; yet, in  
all Propriety of Speech, natural Behaviour  
must be the most easy and unrestrained. It  
is manifest that, in the common Course of  
Life, there is seldom any Inconsistency be-  
tween our Duty and what is *called* Interest:  
It is much seldomer that there is an Incon-  
sistency between Duty and what is really  
our

Our present Interest; meaning by Interest, SERM.  
Happiness and Satisfaction. Self-love then, III.  
though confined to the Interest of the present  
World, does in general perfectly coin-  
cide with Virtue; and leads us to one and  
the same Course of Life. But, whatever  
Exceptions there are to this, which are much  
fewer than they are commonly thought, all  
shall be set right at the final Distribution of  
things. It is a manifest Absurdity to suppose  
Evil prevailing finally over Good, under the  
Conduct and Administration of a perfect  
Mind.

THE whole Argument, which I have  
been now insisting upon, may be thus sum-  
med up and given you in one View. The  
Nature of Man is adapted to some Course  
of Action or other. Upon comparing some  
Actions with this Nature, they appear suit-  
able and correspondent to it: From Com-  
parison of other Actions with the same Na-  
ture, there arises to our View some Unsuit-  
ableness or Disproportion. The Corre-  
spondence of Actions to the Nature of the  
Agent renders them natural; Their Dispro-  
portion to it, unnatural. That an Action  
is correspondent to the Nature of the A-  
gent, does not arise from its being agreea-

SER.ble to the Principle which happens to be  
III. the strongest: For it may be so, and yet be  
quite disproportionate to the Nature of the  
Agent. The Correspondence therefore, or  
Disproportion, arises from somewhat else.  
This can be nothing but a Difference in Na-  
ture and Kind, altogether distinct from  
Strength) between the inward Principles.  
Some then are in Nature and Kind superiour  
to others. And the Correspondence arises  
from the Action being conformable to the  
higher Principle; and the Unsuitableness  
from its being contrary to it. Reasonable  
Self-love and Conscience are the chief or  
superior Principles in the Nature of Man:  
Because an Action may be suitable to this  
Nature, though all other Principles be vio-  
lated; but becomes unsuitable, if either of  
those are. Conscience and Self-love, if we  
understand our true Happiness, always lead  
us the same Way. Duty and Interest are  
perfectly coincident; for the most Part in  
this World, but intirely and in every In-  
stance if we take in the future, and the  
whole; this being implied in the Notion  
of a good and perfect Administration of  
Things. Thus they who have been so wise  
in their Generation as to regard only their  
own

## *Upon Humane Nature.* 57

own supposed Interest, at the Expence and SERM.  
to the Injury of others, shall at last find, III.  
that he who has given up all the Advantages  
of the present World, rather than violate his  
Conscience and the Relations of Life, has in-  
finitely better provided for himself, and se-  
cured his own Interest and Happiness.

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S E R M O N



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## S E R M O N IV.

### *Upon the Government of the Tongue.*

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J A M E S i. 26.

*If any Man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his Tongue, but deceiveth his own Heart, this Man's Religion is vain.*

**T**HE Translation of this Text would SERM. be more determinate by being more IV. literal, thus: *If any Man among you seemeth to be religious, not bridling his Tongue, but deceiving his own Heart, this Man's Religion is vain.* This determines that the Words, *but deceiveth his own Heart*, are not put in Opposition to, *seemeth to be religious*, but to, *bridleth not his Tongue.*

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SER.M. Tongue. The certain determinate Meaning  
IV. of the Text then being, that he who seemeth  
~~ to be religious, and bridleth not his  
Tongue, but in that particular deceiveth his  
own Heart, this Man's Religion is vain; we  
may observe somewhat very forcible and ex-  
pressive in these Words of St. James. As if  
the Apostle had said, No Man surely can  
make any Pretences to Religion, who does  
not at least believe that he bridleth his  
Tongue: If he puts on any Appearance or  
Face of Religion, and yet does not govern  
his Tongue, he must surely deceive himself  
in that Particular, and think he does: And  
whoever is so unhappy as to deceive himself  
in this, to imagine he keeps that unruly Fa-  
culty in due Subjection, when indeed he does  
not, whatever the other Part of his Life be,  
his Religion is vain; the Government of the  
Tongue being a most material Restraint  
which Virtue lays us under: Without it no  
Man can be truly religious.

IN treating upon this Subject, I will con-  
sider,

First, WHAT is the general Vice or Fault  
here referred to: Or what Disposition in Men  
is supposed in Moral Reflections and Precepts  
concerning bridling the Tongue.

Secondly,

Secondly, WHEN it may be said of any SERM. one, that he has a due Government over IV. himself in this Respect.

I. Now the Fault referred to, and the Disposition supposed, in Precepts and Reflections concerning the Government of the Tongue, is not Evil-speaking from Malice, nor Lying or bearing false Witness from indirect selfish Designs. The Disposition to these, and the actual Vices themselves, all come under other Subjects. The Tongue may be employed about, and made to serve all the Purposes of Vice, in tempting and deceiving, in Perjury and Injustice. But the Thing here supposed and referred to, is Talkativeness: A Disposition to be talking, abstracted from the Consideration of what is to be said; with very little or no Regard to, or Thought of doing, either Good or Harm. And let not any imagine this to be a slight Matter, and that it deserves not to have so great Weight laid upon it; till he has considered, what Evil is implied in it, and the bad Effects which follow from it. It is perhaps true, that they who are addicted to this Folly would choose to confine themselves to Trifles and indifferent Subjects, and so intend only to be guilty of being impertinent:

## 62 *A SERMON upon the*

SERMON: But as they cannot go on for ever  
IV. talking of Nothing, as common Matters  
will not afford a sufficient Fund for per-  
petual continued Discourse: when Subjects of  
this Kind are exhausted, they will go on to  
Defamation, Scandal, divulging of Secrets,  
their own Secrets as well as those of others,  
any thing rather than be silent. They are  
plainly hurried on in the Heat of their Talk  
to say quite different Things from what they  
first intended, and which they afterwards  
wish unsaid; or improper things, which  
they had no other End in saying but only  
to afford Employment to their Tongue.  
And if these People expect to be heard and  
regarded, for there are some content merely  
with talking, they will invent to engage  
your Attention: and, when they have heard  
the least imperfect Hint of an Affair, they  
will out of their own Head add the Cir-  
cumstances of Time and Place, and other  
Matters to make out their Story, and give  
the Appearance of Probability to it: Not  
that they have any Concern about being  
believed, otherwise than as a Means of be-  
ing heard. The Thing is, to engage your  
Attention; to take you up wholly for the pre-  
sent Time: What Reflections will be made  
afterwards,

# Government of the Tongue. 63

afterwards, is in Truth the least of their Thoughts. And further, when Persons, who indulge themselves in these Liberties of the Tongue, are in any Degree offended with another, as little Disgusts and Misunderstandings will be, they allow themselves to defame and revile such an one without any Moderation or Bounds; though the Offence is so very slight, that they themselves would not do, nor perhaps wish him an Injury in any other Way. And in this Case the Scandal and Revilings are chiefly owing to Talkativeness, and not bridling their Tongue; and so come under our present Subject. The least Occasion in the World will make the Humour break out in this particular Way, or in another. It is like a Torrent, which must and will flow; but the least thing imaginable will first of all give it either this or another Direction, turn it into this or that Channel: Or like a Fire; the Nature of which, when in a Heap of combustible Matter, is to spread and lay waste all around; but any one of a thousand little Accidents will occasion it to break out first either in this or another particular Part.

THE Subject then before us, though it does run up into, and can scarce be treat-

64 *A SERMON upon the*  
SERM. ed as intirely distinct from all others; yet  
IV. it needs not be so much mixed or blend-  
ed with them as it often is. Every Facul-  
ty and Power may be used as the Instru-  
ment of premeditated Vice and Wickedness,  
meerly as the most proper and effectual  
Means of executing such Designs. But if  
a Man, from deep Malice and Desire of  
Revenge, should meditate a Falshood with  
a settled Design to ruin his Neighbour's Re-  
putation, and should with great Coolness  
and Deliberation spread it; no-body would  
choose to say of such an one, that he had  
no Government of his Tongue. A Man  
may use the Faculty of Speech as an In-  
strument of False-witness, who yet has so  
intire a Command over that Faculty, as ne-  
ver to speak but from Forethought and cool  
Design. Here the Crime is Injustice and  
Perjury: and strictly speaking, no more be-  
longs to the present Subject, than Perjury  
and Injustice in any other Way. But there  
is such a Thing as a Disposition to be talk-  
ing for its own Sake; from which Persons  
often say any thing, good or bad, of others,  
meerly as a Subject of Discourse, according  
to the particular Temper they themselves  
happen to be in, and to pass away the pre-  
sent

sent Time. There is likewise to be observed SERM. in Persons such a strong and eager Desire of engaging Attention to what they say, that they will speak Good or Evil, Truth or otherwise, meerly as one or the other seems to be most hearkened to: And this, though it is sometimes joined, is not the same with the Desire of being thought important and Men of Consequence. There is in some such a Disposition to be talking, that an Offence of the slightest Kind, and such as would not raise any other Resentment, yet raises, if I may so speak, the Resentment of the Tongue, puts it into a Flame, into the most ungovernable Motions. This Outrage, when the Person it respects is present, we distinguish in the lower Rank of People by a peculiar Term: And let it be observed, that though the Decencies of Behaviour are a little kept, the same Outrage and Virulence, indulged when he is absent, is an Offence of the same Kind. But not to distinguish any further in this Manner: Men run into Faults and Follies, which cannot so properly be referred to any one general Head as this, that they have not a due Government over their Tongue.

SERM. AND this unrestrained Volubility and  
IV. Wantonness of Speech is the Occasion of  
~~ numberless Evils and Vexations in Life. It  
begets Resentment in him who is the Subject  
of it; sows the Seed of Strife and Dissension  
amongst others; and inflames little Disgusts  
and Offences, which if let alone would  
wear away of themselves: It is often of  
as bad Effect upon the good Name of o-  
thers, as deep Envy or Malice: And, to say  
the least of it in this Respect, it destroys  
and perverts a certain Equity of the utmost  
Importance to Society to be observed;  
namely, that Praise and Dispraise, a good  
or bad Character, should always be bestowed  
according to Desert. The Tongue used  
in such a licentious Manner is like a Sword  
in the Hand of a Madman; it is employed  
at random, it can scarce possibly do any  
Good, and for the most Part does a World  
of Mischief; and implies not only great  
Folly and a trifling Spirit, but great Vitiou-  
ness of Mind, great Indifference to Truth and  
Falsity, and to the Reputation, Welfare, and  
Good of others. So much Reason is there for  
what St. James says of the Tongue, \* *It is a  
Fire, a World of Iniquity, it defileth the whole  
Body*

# Government of the Tongue. 67

Body, setteth on Fire the Course of Nature, and is itself set on Fire of Hell. This is the Faculty or Disposition which we are required to keep a Guard upon: These are the Vices and Follies it runs into, when not kept under due Restraint.

SERM:  
IV.  
~~

II. WHEREIN the due Government of the Tongue consists, or when it may be said of any one in a moral and religious Sense that he *bridleth his Tongue*, I come now to consider.

THE due and proper Use of any natural Faculty or Power, is to be judged of by the End and Design for which it was given us. The chief Purpose, for which the Faculty of Speech was given to Man, is plainly that we might communicate our Thoughts to each other, in order to carry on the Affairs of the World; for Business, and for our Improvement in Knowledge and Learning. But the good Author of our Nature designed us not only Necessaries, but likewise Enjoyment and Satisfaction, in that Being he hath graciously given, and in that Condition of Life he hath placed us in, There are secondary Uses of our Faculties: They administer to Delight, as well as to Necessity: And as they are equally adapted

SERM. to both, there is no Doubt but he intended  
IV. them for our Gratification, as well as for the  
~~ Support and Continuance of our Being. The  
secondary Use of Speech is to please and be  
entertaining to each other in Conversation.  
This is in every Respect allowable and  
right: It unites Men closer in Alliances and  
Friendships; gives us a Fellow-feeling of the  
Prosperity and Unhappiness of each other;  
and is in several Respects serviceable to Vir-  
tue, and to promote good Behaviour in the  
World. And provided there be not too  
much Time spent in it, if it were considered  
only in the Way of Gratification and De-  
light, Men must have strange Notions of  
God and of Religion, to think that He can  
be offended with it, or that it is any way in-  
consistent with the strictest Virtue. But the  
Truth is, such sort of Conversation, though  
it has no particular good Tendency, yet  
it has a general Good one: It is social and  
friendly, and tends to promote Humanity,  
Good-nature and Civility.

As the End and Use, so likewise the A-  
buse of Speech, relates to the one or other  
of These; either to Business, or to Conver-  
sation. As to the former; Deceit in the  
Management of Business and Affairs does  
not

not properly belong to the Subject now before us: Though one may just mention that Multitude, that endless Number of Words, with which Business is perplexed; when a much fewer would, as it should seem, better serve the Purpose: But this must be left to those who understand the Matter. The Government of the Tongue, considered as a Subject of itself, relates chiefly to Conversation; to that Kind of Discourse which usually fills up the Time spent in friendly Meetings, and Visits of Civility. And the Danger is, lest Persons entertain themselves and others at the Expence of their Wisdom and their Virtue, and to the Injury or Offence of their Neighbour. If they will observe and keep clear of these, they may be as free, and easy, and unreserved, as they can desire.

THE Cautions to be given for avoiding these Dangers, and to render Conversation innocent and agreeable, fall under the following Particulars: Silence; Talking of indifferent Things; and, which makes up too great a Part of Conversation, Giving of Characters, Speaking well or evil of others.

THE wise Man observes, that *there is a Time to speak, and a Time to keep silence.*

70      *A SERMON upon the*

SER M. One meets with People in the World, who  
IV. seem never to have made the last of these  
~~ Observation. And yet these great Talkers  
do not at all speak from their having any  
thing to say, as every Sentence shews, but  
only from their Inclination to be talking.  
Their Conversation is merely an Exercise  
of the Tongue: No other humane Faculty  
has any Share in it. It is strange these Persons  
can help reflecting, that unless they  
have in Truth a superior Capacity, and are  
in an extraordinary Manner furnished for  
Conversation; if they are entertaining, it is  
at their own Expence. Is it possible, that  
it should never come into People's Thoughts  
to suspect, whether or no it be to their Ad-  
vantage to shew so very much of themselves?  
*O that you would altogether hold your  
Peace, and it should be your Wisdom* \*.  
Remember likewise there are Persons who  
love fewer Words, an inoffensive Sort of  
People, and who deserve some Regard;  
though of too still and composed Tempers  
for you. Of this Number was the Son of  
Sirach: For he plainly speaks from Experi-  
ence, when he says, *As Hills of Sand are  
to the Steps of the Aged, so is one of many  
Words*

\* Job xiii.

## *Government of the Tongue.* 71

*Words to a quiet Man.* But one would SERM. think it should be obvious to every one, that IV. when they are in Company with their Superiors of any Kind, in Years, Knowledge, and Experience; when proper and useful Subjects are discoursed of, which they cannot bear a Part in; that these are Times for Silence: when they should learn to hear, and be attentive; at least in their turn. It is indeed a very unhappy Way these People are in: They in a Manner cut themselves out from all Advantage of Conversation, except that of being entertained with their own Talk: Their Business in coming into Company not being at all to be informed, to hear, to learn; but to display themselves; or rather to exert their Faculty, and talk without any Design at all. And if we consider Conversation as an Entertainment, as somewhat to unbend the Mind; as a Diversion from the Cares, the Business, and the Sorrows of Life; it is of the very Nature of it, that the Discourse be mutual. This, I say, is implied in the very notion of what we distinguish by Conversation, or being in Company. Attention to the continued Discourse of one alone grows more painful often, than the Cares and Business we come to be diverted

SER.M. from. He therefore who imposes this upon  
IV. us, is guilty of a double Offence ; arbitrarily  
enjoining Silence upon all the rest, and like-  
wise obliging them to this painful Attention.

I AM sensible these Things are apt to be  
passed over, as too little to come into a seri-  
ous Discourse : But in Reality Men are obli-  
ged, even in Point of Morality and Virtue,  
to observe all the Decencies of Behaviour.  
The greatest Evils in Life have had their  
Rise from somewhat, which was thought of  
too little Importance to be attended to.  
And as to the Matter we are now upon,  
it is absolutely necessary to be considered.  
For if People will not maintain a due Go-  
vernment over themselves, in regarding pro-  
per Times and Seasons for Silence, but *will*  
be talking ; they certainly, whether they de-  
sign it or not at first, will go on to Scandal  
and Evil-speaking, and divulging Secrets.

I F it were needful to say any thing fur-  
ther, to persuade Men to learn this Lesson of  
Silence ; one might put them in mind, how  
insignificant they render themselves by this  
excessive Talkativeness : insomuch that, if  
they do chance to say any Thing which de-  
serves to be attended to and regarded, it is  
lost

# Government of the Tongue. 73

lost in the Variety and Abundance which SERM.  
they utter of another Sort. IV.

THE Occasions of Silence then are obvious, and one would think should be easily distinguished by every Body: Namely, when a Man has nothing to say; or nothing, but what is better unsaid; Better, either in regard to the particular Persons he is present with; or from its being an Interruption to Conversation itself; or to Conversation of a more agreeable Kind; or better, lastly, with regard to himself. I will end this Particular with two Reflections of the wise Man: One of which, in the strongest Manner, exposes the ridiculous Part of this Licentiousness of the Tongue; and the other, the great Danger and Viciousness of it. *When he that is a Fool walketh by the Way Side, his Wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a Fool\**. The other is, *In the Multitude of Words there wanteth not Sin* †.

As to the Government of the Tongue in respect to talking upon indifferent Subjects: After what has been said concerning the due Government of it in respect to the Occasions and Times for Silence, there is little more necessary,

\* Eccles. x. 3.

† Prov. x. 19.

74 *A SERMON upon the*

SERMON necessary, than only to caution Men to be  
IV. fully satisfied, that the Subjects are indeed  
of an indifferent Nature; and not to spend  
too much Time in Conversation of this  
Kind. But Persons must be sure to take  
heed, that the Subject of their Discourse be  
at least of an indifferent Nature: That it be  
no way offensive to Virtue, Religion, or  
good Manners; that it be not of a licentious  
dissolute Sort, this leaving always ill Impres-  
sions upon the Mind; that it be no way in-  
jurious or vexatious to others; and that too  
much Time be not spent this way, to the  
neglect of those Duties and Offices of Life  
which belong to their Station and Condi-  
tion in the world. However, though there is  
not any Necessity, that Men should aim at be-  
ing important and weighty in every Sentence  
they speak: Yet since useful Subjects, at least  
of some Kinds, are as entertaining as others;  
a wise Man, even when he desires to unbend  
his Mind from Business, would choose that  
the Conversation might turn upon some-  
what instructive.

THE last Thing is, The Government of the  
Tongue as relating to Discourse of the Af-  
fairs of others, and giving of Characters.  
These are in a Manner the same: And one  
can

can scarce call it an indifferent Subject, because Discourse upon it almost perpetually runs into somewhat criminal.

AND first of all, it were very much to be wished that this did not take up so great a Part of Conversation; because it is indeed a Subject of a dangerous Nature. Let any one consider the various Interests, Competitions, and little Misunderstandings which arise amongst Men; and he will soon see, that he is not unprejudiced and impartial; that he is not, as I may speak, neutral enough, to trust himself with talking of the Character and Concerns of his Neighbour, in a free, careless, and unreserved Manner. There is perpetually, and often it is not attended to, a Rivalship amongst People of one Kind or another, in respect to Wit, Beauty, Learning, Fortune, and that one Thing will insensibly influence them to speak to the Disadvantage of others, even where there is no formed Malice or ill Design. Since therefore it is so hard to enter into this Subject without offending, the first Thing to be observed is, that People should learn to decline it; to get over that strong Inclination most have to be talking of the Concerns and Behaviour of their Neighbour.

B U T

SER.M. But since it is impossible that this Subject  
IV. should be wholly excluded Conversation ;  
and since it is necessary that the Characters  
of Men should be known : The next Thing  
is, that it is a Matter of Importance what  
is said ; and therefore, that we should be re-  
ligiously scrupulous and exact to say nothing,  
either good or bad, but what is true. I  
put it thus, because it is in Reality of as  
great Importance to the Good of Society,  
that the Characters of bad Men should be  
known, as that the Characters of good Men  
should. People, who are given to Scandal  
and Detraction, may indeed make an ill use  
of this Observation : But Truths, which are  
of Service towards regulating our Conduct,  
are not to be disowned, or even concealed, be-  
cause a bad Use may be made of them. This  
however would be effectually prevented, if  
these two Things were attended to. *First*,  
That, though it is equally of bad Consequence  
to Society, that Men should have either good  
or ill Characters which they do not deserve ;  
yet, when you say somewhat Good of a  
Man which he does not deserve, there is  
no Wrong done him in particular ; where-  
as, when you say Evil of a Man which he  
does not deserve, here is a direct formal In-  
jury,

jury, a real Piece of Injustice done him. SERM. This therefore makes a wide Difference; IV. and gives us, in Point of Virtue, much greater Latitude in speaking well than ill, of others.   
*Secondly*, A good Man is friendly to his Fellow-creatures, and a Lover of Mankind, and so will, upon every Occasion, and often without any, say all the Good he can of every Body: But, so far as he is a good Man, will never be disposed to speak Evil of any, unless there be some other Reason for it, besides barely that it is true. If he be charged with having given an ill Character, he will scarce think it a sufficient Justification of himself to say it was a true one, unless he can also give some farther Account how he came to do so: A just Indignation against particular Instances of Villany, where they are great and scandalous; or to prevent an innocent Man from being deceived and betrayed, when he has great Trust and Confidence in one who does not deserve it. Justice must be done to every Part of a Subject, when we are considering it. If there be a Man, who bears a fair Character in the World, whom yet ye know to be without Faith or Honesty, to be really an ill Man; it must be allowed in general, that we

SERM. we shall do a Piece of Service to Society, IV. by letting such an one's true Character be known. This is no more, than what we have an Instance of in our Saviour himself; \* though he was mild and gentle beyond Example. However, no Words can express too strongly the Caution which should be used in such a Case as this.

UPON the whole Matter: If People would observe the obvious Occasions of Silence, if they would subdue the Inclination to Tale-bearing, and that eager Desire to engage Attention, which is an original Disease in some Minds; they would be in little Danger of offending with their Tongue; and would, in a moral and religious Sense, have due Government over it.

I WILL conclude with some Precepts and Reflections of the Son of Sirach upon this Subject. *Be swift to hear: and, if thou hast Understanding, answer thy Neighbour; if not, lay thy Hand upon thy Mouth.* Honour and Shame is in Talk. *A Man of an ill Tongue is dangerous in his City, and he that is rash in his Talk shall be hated.* *A wise Man will hold his Tongue, till he see Opportunity; but a Babler and a Fool will*

## Government of the Tongue. 79

will regard no Time. He that useth many SERM.  
Words shall be abhorred; and he that taketh IV.  
to himself Authority therein, shall be hated. ~

*A back-biting Tongue hath disquieted many;  
strong Cities hath it pulled down, and over-  
thrown the Houses of great Men. The Tongue  
of a Man is his Fall; but if thou love to hear,  
thou shalt receive Understanding.*

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SERMON



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# S E R M O N V.

## *Upon Compassion.*

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R O M. xii. 15.

*Rejoyce with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.*

EVERY Man is to be considered in two Capacities, the Private and Publick; as designed to pursue his own Interest, and likewise to contribute to the Good of others. Whoever will consider, may see, that in general there is no Contrariety between these; but that from the original Constitution of Man, and the Circumstances he is placed in, they perfectly coincide, and mutually carry on each other. But, amongst the great Variety of Affections or Principles of Action in our Nature, some in their primary Intention and Design seem to belong to the single or private,

G

SER. V.

SERM. vate, others to the publick or social Capa-  
 V. city. The Affections required in the Text  
 are of the latter Sort. When we rejoice  
 in the Prosperity of others, and compassi-  
 onate their Distresses, we, as it were, substi-  
 tute them for ourselves, their Interest for  
 our own ; and have the same Kind of Plea-  
 sure in their Prosperity and Sorrow in their  
 Distress, as we have from Reflection upon  
 our own. Now there is nothing strange  
 or unaccountable in our being thus carried  
 out, and affected towards the Interests of  
 others. For, if there be any Appetite, or  
 any inward Principle besides Self-love ; why  
 may there not be an Affection to the Good  
 of our Fellow-Creatures, and Delight from  
 that Affection's being gratified, and Uneasi-  
 ness from Things going contrary to it? \*

OF

\* There being manifestly this Appearance of Men's substi-  
 tuting Others for Themselves, and being carried out and af-  
 fected towards them as towards themselves ; some Persons,  
 who have a System which excludes every Affection to this  
 Sort, have taken a pleasant Method to solve it ; and tell you it  
 is *not another* you are at all concerned about, but your *self only* ;  
 when you feel the Affection called Compassion, *i. e.* Here  
 is a plain Matter of Fact, which Men cannot reconcile with  
 the general Account they think fit to give of Things : They  
 therefore, instead of *that* manifest Fact substitute *another*,  
 which is reconcileable to their own Scheme. For does not  
 every

OF these two, Delight in the Prosperity SERM.  
of others and Compassion for their Distresses, V.

G 2

the

every Body by Compassion mean, an Affection the Object of which is Another in Distress? Instead of this, but designing to have it mistaken for this, they speak of an Affection or Passion, the Object of which is Ourselves, or Danger to ourselves. Hobbs defines *Pity, Imagination, or Fiction of future Calamity to ourselves, proceeding from the Sense* (he means Sight or Knowledge) *of another Man's Calamity.* Thus Fear and Compassion would be the same Idea, and a fearful and a compassionate Man the same Character, which every one immediately sees are totally different. Further, to those who give any Scope to their Affections, there is no Perception or inward Feeling more universal than this: that one who has been merciful and compassionate throughout the Course of his Behaviour, should himself be treated with Kindness, if he happens to fall into Circumstances of Distress. Is Fear then or Cowardice so great a Recommendation to the Favour of the Bulk of Mankind? Or is it not plain, that meer Fearlessness (and therefore not the contrary) is one of the most popular Qualifications? This shews that Mankind are not affected towards Compassion as Fear, but as somewhat totally different.

Nothing would more expose such Accounts as these of the Affections which are favourable and friendly to our Fellow Creatures, than to substitute the Definitions which this Author, and others who follow his Steps, give of such Affections, instead of the Words by which they are commonly expressed. Hobbs, after having laid down that *Pity, or Compassion* is only Fear for ourselves, goes on to explain the Reason why we pity our Friends in Distress more than others. Now substitute the *Definition* instead of the Word *Pity* in this Place, and the Inquiry will be, why we fear our Friends, &c. which Words (since he really does not mean why we are afraid of them) make no Question or Sentence at all. So that common Language, the Words *to Compassionate, to Pity*, cannot be accommodated to his Account of Compassion. The very joining

SER. the last is felt much more generally than  
V. the former. Though Men do not univer-  
sally

ing of the Words to *pity our Friends*, is a direct Contradiction to his Definition of Pity: Because those Words so joined, necessarily express that our Friends are the Objects of the Passion; whereas his Definition of it asserts, that Ourselves (or Danger to ourselves) are the only Objects of it. He might indeed have avoided this Absurdity, by plainly saying what he is going to account for; namely, why the Sight of the Innocent, or of our Friends in Distress, raises greater Fear for ourselves than the Sight of other Persons in Distress. But had he put the Thing thus plainly, the Fact itself would have been doubted; that *the Sight of our Friends in Distress raises in us greater Fear for ourselves, than the Sight of others in Distress*. And in the next Place it would immediately have occurred to every one, that the Fact now mentioned, which at least is *doubtful*, whether true or false, was not the same with this Fact, which no-body ever doubted, that *the Sight of our Friends in Distress raises in us greater Compassion than the Sight of Others in Distress*; Every one, I say, would have seen that these are not the same, but *two different Inquiries*; and consequently, that Fear and Compassion are not the same. Suppose a Person to be in real Danger, and by some Means or other to have forgot it; any trifling Accident, any Sound might alarm him, recall the Danger to his Remembrance, and renew his Fear: But it is almost too grossly ridiculous (though it is to show an Absurdity) to speak of that Sound or Accident as an Object of Compassion; and yet according to Mr. Hobbs, our greatest Friend in Distress is no more to us, no more the Object of Compassion or of any Affection in our Heart: Neither the one or the other raises any Emotion in our Mind, but only the Thoughts of our Liableness to Calamity, and the Fear of it; and both equally do this It is fit such sort of Accounts of Humane Nature should be shown to be what they really are, because there is raised upon them a general Scheme which undermines

fally rejoice with all whom they see re- SERM.  
joyce, yet, accidental Obstacles removed, V.  
they naturally compassionate all in some  
undermines the whole Foundation of common Justice and  
Honesty. See *Hobbs of Hum Nat.* c. 9. §. 10.

There are often three distinct Perceptions or inward Feelings upon Sight of Persons in Distress: Real Sorrow and Concern for the Misery of our Fellow-creatures; some Degree of Satisfaction from a Consciousness of our Freedom from that Misery; and, as the Mind passes on from one thing to another, it is not unnatural from such an Occasion to reflect upon our own Liableness to the same or other Calamities. The two last frequently accompany the first, but it is the first *only* which is properly Compassion, of which the Distressed are the Objects, and which directly carries us with Calmness and Thought to their Assistance. Any one of these, from various and complicated Reasons, may in particular Cases prevail over the other two; and there are, I suppose, Instances where the bare *Sight* of Distress, without our feeling any Compassion for it, may be the Occasion of either or both of the two latter Perceptions. One might add, that if there be really any such thing as the Fiction or Imagination of Danger to ourselves from Sight of the Miseries of others, which *Hobbs* speaks of, and which he has absurdly mistaken for the whole of Compassion; if there be any thing of this Sort common to Mankind, distinct from the Reflection of Reason, it would be a most remarkable Instance of what was furthest from his Thoughts, namely, of a mutual Sympathy between each Particular of the Species, a Fellow-feeling common to Mankind. It would not indeed be an Example of our substituting others for Ourselves, but it would be an Example of our substituting Ourselves for Others. And as it would not be an Instance of Benevolence, so neither would it be any Instance of Self-love: For this Phantom of Danger to Ourselves, naturally rising to View upon Sight of the Distresses of Others, would be no more an Instance of Love to Ourselves, than the Pain of Hunger is.

SERM. Degree whom they see in Distress: so far as  
V. they have any real Perception or Sense  
of that Distress: Insomuch that Words ex-  
pressing this latter, Pity, Compassion, fre-  
quently occur, whereas we have scarce  
any single one, by which the former is di-  
stinctly express'd. Congratulation indeed  
answers Condolance: But both these Words  
are intended to signify certain Forms of  
Civility, rather than any inward Sensation  
or Feeling. This Difference or Inequality  
is so remarkable, that we plainly consider  
Compassion as itself an original, distinct,  
particular Affection in Humane Nature;  
whereas to rejoice in the Good of others,  
is only a Consequence of the general Af-  
fection of Love and Good-will to them.  
The Reason and Account of which Matter  
is this: When a Man has obtained any par-  
ticular Advantage or Felicity, his End is  
gained; and he does not in that particular  
want the Assistance of another: There was  
therefore no need of a distinct Affection to-  
wards that Felicity of another already ob-  
tained; neither would such Affection direct-  
ly carry him to do Good to that Person:  
Whereas Men in Distress want Assistance;  
and Compassion leads us directly to assist  
them.

them. The Object of the former is the present Felicity of another ; the Object of the latter is the present Misery of another : It is easy to see that the latter wants a particular Affection for its Relief, and that the former does not want one, because it does not want Assistance. And upon Supposition of a distinct Affection in both Cases, the one must rest in the Exercise of itself, having nothing further to gain ; the other does not rest in itself, but carries us on to assist the Distressed.

B U T, supposing these Affections natural to the Mind, particularly the last ; " Has not each Man Troubles enough of his own ? must he indulge an Affection which appropriates to himself those of others ? which leads him to contract the least desirable of all Friendships, Friendships with the Unfortunate ? Must we invert the known Rule of Prudence, and choose to associate ourselves with the Distressed ? Or allowing that we ought, so far as it is in our Power to relieve them, yet it is not better to do this from Reason and Duty ? Does not Passion and Affection of every Kind perpetually mislead us ? Nay, is not Passion and Affection itself a Weakness, and

SERM. " what a perfect Being must be entirely free  
V. " from?" Perhaps so: But it is Mankind I  
am speaking of; imperfect Creatures, and  
who naturally, and from the Condition we  
are placed in, necessarily depend upon each  
other. With respect to such Creatures, it  
would be found of as bad Consequence to  
eradicate all natural Affections, as to be in-  
tirely governed by them. This would al-  
most sink us to the Condition of Brutes;  
and That would leave us without a suffici-  
ent Principle of Action. Reason alone,  
whatever any one may wish, is not in Rea-  
lity a sufficient Motive of Virtue in such a  
Creature as Man; but this Reason joined  
with those Affections which God has im-  
press'd upon his Heart: And when These are  
allowed Scope to exercise themselves, but  
under strict Government and Direction of  
Reason; then it is we act suitably to our  
Nature, and to the Circumstances God  
has placed us in. Neither is Affection it-  
self at all a Weakness; nor does it argue  
Defect, any otherwise than as our Senses  
and Appetites do; They belong to our Con-  
dition of Nature, and are what we can-  
not be without. God Almighty is, to be  
sure, unmoved by Passion or Appetite, un-  
changed

changed by Affection: But then it is to be SERM. added, that he neither sees, nor hears, nor perceives Things by any Senses like ours; but in a Manner infinitely more perfect. Now, as it is an Absurdity almost too gross to be mentioned, for a Man to endeavour to get rid of his Senses, because the supreme Being discerns Things more perfectly without them; it is as real, though not so obvious an Absurdity, to endeavour to eradicate the Passions he has given us, because He is without them. For, since our Passions are as really a Part of our Constitution as our Senses; since the former as really belong to our Condition of Nature as the latter; to get rid of either, is equally a Violation of and breaking in upon that Nature and Constitution he has given us. Both our Senses and our Passions are a Supply to the Imperfection of our Nature: Thus they shew that we are such sort of Creatures, as to stand in need of those Helps which higher Orders of Creatures do not. But it is not the Supply, but the Deficiency; as it is not a Remedy, but a Disease which is the Imperfection. However, our Appetites, Passions, Senses, no way imply Disease: nor indeed do they imply Deficiency or Imperfection

## A SERMON

SERM. fection of any sort; but only This, that the  
V. Constitution of Nature according to which  
God has made us, is such as to require them.  
And it is so far from being true, that a wise  
Man must entirely suppress Compassion,  
and all Fellow-feeling for others, as a  
Weakness; and trust to Reason alone, to  
teach and enforce upon him the Practice  
of the several Charities we owe to our  
Kind; that on the contrary, even the bare  
Exercise of such Affections would itself be  
for the Good and Happiness of the World;  
and the Imperfection of the higher Princi-  
ples of Reason and Religion in Man, the  
little Influence they have upon our Practice,  
and the Strength and Prevalency of contrary  
ones plainly require these Affections to be a  
Restraint upon these latter, and a Supply to  
the Deficiencies of the former.

*First, T H E* very exercise itself of these Af-  
fections in a just and reasonable Manner and  
Degree, would upon the whole increase the  
Satisfactions, and lessen the Miseries of Life.

I T is the Tendency and Busines of Vir-  
tue and Religion to procure, as much as  
may be universal Good-will, Trust and  
Friendship amongst Mankind. If this could  
be brought to obtain; and each Man en-  
joyed

joyed the Happiness of others, as every one does that of a Friend; and looked upon the Success and Prosperity of his Neighbour, as every one does upon that of his Children and Family; it is too manifest to be insisted upon, how much the Enjoyments of Life would be increased. There would be so much Happiness introduced into the World, without any Deduction or Inconvenience from it, in Proportion as the Precept of *rejoicing with those who rejoice* was universally obeyed. Our Saviour has owned this good Affection as belonging to our Nature, in the Parable of the *lost Sheep*; and does not think it to the Disadvantage of a perfect State, to represent its Happiness as capable of Increase, from Reflection upon that of others.

B U T since in such a Creature as Man, Compassion or Sorrow for the Distress of others, seems so far necessarily connected with Joy in their Prosperity, as that whoever rejoices in one must unavoidably compassionate the other; there cannot be that Delight or Satisfaction, which appears to be so considerable, without the Inconveniencies, whatever they are, of Compassion.

H O W E V E R,

SERM. HOWEVER, without considering this  
V. Connection, theoe is no doubt but that more  
Good than Evil, more Delight than Sorrow,  
arises from Compassion itself; there being  
so many Things which ballance the Sor-  
row of it. There is first the Relief which  
the Distressed feel from this Affection in  
others towards them. There is likewise the  
additional Misery which they would feel  
from the Reflection that no one commi-  
ferated their Case. It is indeed true, that  
any Disposition, prevailing beyond a certain  
Degree, becomes somewhat wrong; and  
we have ways of speaking, which though  
they do not directly express that Excess,  
yet, always lead our Thoughts to it, and  
give us the Notion of it. Thus, when Men-  
tion is made of Delight in being pitied,  
this always conveys to our Mind the Notion  
of somewhat which is really a Weakness:  
The Manner of speaking, I say, im-  
plies a certain Weakness and Feebleness of  
Mind, which is and ought to be disap-  
proved. But Men of the greatest Forti-  
tude would in Distress feel Uneasiness, from  
knowing that no Person in the World had  
any sort of Compassion or real Concern  
for them; and in som<sup>a</sup> Cases, especially  
when

when the Temper is enfeebled by Sickness SERM. or any long and great Distress, doubtless, V. would feel a kind of Relief even from the helpless Good-will and ineffectual Assurances of those about them. Over against the Sorrow of Compassion is likewise to be set a peculiar calm Kind of Satisfaction, which accompanies it, unless in Cases where the Distress of another is by some Means so brought home to ourselves, as to become in a Manner our own; or when from Weakness of Mind the Affection rises too high, which ought to be corrected. This Tranquility or calm Satisfaction proceeds, partly from Consciousness of a right Affection and Temper of Mind, and partly from a Sense of our own Freedom from the Misery we compassionate. This last may possibly appear to some at first sight faulty; but it really is not so. It is the same with that positive Enjoyment, which sudden Ease from Pain for the present affords, arising from a real Sense of Misery, joined with a Sense of our Freedom from it; which in all Cases must afford some Degree of Satisfaction.

To these Things must be added the Observation, which respects both the Affections we are considering; that they who have got

SERM. got over all Fellow-feeling for Others, have  
V. withal contracted a certain Calloſneſs of  
Heart, which renders them insenſible to most  
other Satisfactions, but thoſe of the groſteſt  
kind.

Secondly, W I T H O U T the Exercise of  
these Affections, Men would certainly be  
much more wanting in the Offices of Charity  
they owe to each other, and likewise more  
cruel and injurious, than they are at preſent.

T H E private Interest of the Individual  
would not be ſufficiently provided for by  
reaſonable and cool Self-Love alone: There-  
fore the Appetites and Paſſions are placed  
within as a Guard and further Security,  
without which it would not be taken due  
Care of. It is maniſt our Life would be  
negleſted, were it not for the Calls of  
Hunger and Thirſt, and Wearineſs; not-  
withſtanding that without them Reaſon  
would affiſe us, that the Recruits of Food  
and Sleep are the neceſſary Means of our  
Preſervation. It is therefore abſurd to ima-  
gine, that, without Affection, the ſame Rea-  
ſon alone would be more effectual to engage  
us to perform the Duties we owe to our  
Fellow-Creatures. One of this Make would  
be as deſective, as much wanting, conſidered  
with

with respect to Society; as one of the SERM. former Make would be defective, or wanting, considered as an Individual, or in his private Capacity. Is it possible any can in earnest think, that a Public Spirit, *i. e.* a settled reasonable Principle of Benevolence to Mankind, is so prevalent and strong in the Species, as that we may venture to throw off the under Affections, which are its Assistants, carry it forward and mark out particular Courses for it; Family, Friends, Neighbourhood, the Distressed, our Country? The common Joys and the common Sorrows, which belong to these Relations and Circumstances, are as plainly useful to Society; as the Pain and Pleasure belonging to Hunger, Thirst, and Weariness are of Service to the Individual. In Defect of that higher Principle of Reason, Compassion is often the only Way by which the Indigent can have Access to us: And therefore to eradicate this, though it is not indeed formally to deny them that Assistance which is their Due; yet it is to cut them off from that which is too frequently their only way of obtaining it. And as for those who have shut up this Door against the Complaints of the Miserable, and conquered this Affection in

S E R M. in themselves ; even these Persons will be  
V. under great Restraints from the same Af-  
fection in Others. Thus a Man who has  
himself no Sense of Injustice, Cruelty, Op-  
pression, will be kept from running the ut-  
most Lengths of Wickedness, by fear of  
that Detestation, and even Resentment of  
Inhumanity, in many particular Instances of  
it, which Compassion for the Object, to-  
wards whom such Inhumanity is exercised,  
excites in the Bulk of Mankind. And this  
is frequently the chief Danger, and the chief  
Restraint, which Tyrants and the great Op-  
pressors of the World feel.

I N general, Experience will shew, that as  
want of natural Appetite to Food supposes  
and proceeds from some bodily Disease ;  
so the Apathy the Stoicks talk of, as much  
supposes, or is accompanied with somewhat  
amiss in the Moral Character, in that which  
is the Health of the Mind. Those who for-  
merly aimed at this upon the Foot of Phi-  
losophy, appear to have had better Success  
in eradicating the Affections of Tenderness  
and Compassion, than they had with the  
Passions of Envy, Pride, and Resentment :  
These latter, at best, were but concealed,  
and

and that imperfectly too. How far this Observation may be extended to such as endeavour to suppress the natural Impulses of their Affections, in order to form themselves for Business and the World, I shall not determine. But there does not appear any Capacity or Relation to be named, in which Men ought to be entirely deaf to the Calls of Affection, unless the judicial one is to be excepted.

AND as to those who are commonly called the Men of Pleasure, it is manifest that the Reason they set up for Hardness of Heart, is to avoid being interrupted in their Course, by the Ruin and Misery they are the Authors of: Neither are Persons of this Character always the most free from the Impotencies of Envy and Resentment. What may Men at last bring themselves to, by suppressing their Passions and Affections of one Kind, and leaving those of the other in their full Strength? But surely it might be expected that Persons who make Pleasure their Study and their Business, if they understood what they profess, would reflect, how many of the Entertainments of Life, how many of those Kind of Amusements which seem peculiarly to belong to Men of Leisure and

H

Education,

VI.

SERM. Education, they become insensible to by this  
V. acquired Hardness of Heart.

~~ I SHALL close these Reflections with barely mentioning the Behaviour of that Divine Person, who was the Example of all Perfection in Human Nature, as represented in the Gospels mourning, and even, in a literal Sense, weeping over the Distresses of his Creatures.

THE Observation already made, that, of the two Affections mentioned in the Text, the latter exerts itself much more than the former; that, from the Original Constitution of Humane Nature we much more generally and sensibly compassionate the Distressed, than rejoice with the Prosperous, requires to be particularly considered. This Observation therefore, with the Reflections which arise out of it, and which it leads our Thoughts to, shall be the Subject of another Discourse.

FOR the Conclusion of this, let me just take Notice of the Danger of over-great Refinements; of going besides or beyond the plain, obvious, first Appearances of Things, upon the Subject of Morals and Religion. The least Observation will show, how little the Generality of Men are capable of

of Speculations. Therefore Morality and SERM. Religion must be somewhat plain and easy to be understood: It must appeal to what we call plain common Sense, as distinguished from superior Capacity and Improvement; because it appeals to Mankind. Persons of superior Capacity and Improvement have often fallen into Errors, which no one of meer common Understanding could. Is it possible that one of this latter Character could ever of himself have thought, that there was absolutely no such Thing in Mankind as Affection to the Good of others? suppose of Parents to their Children; or that what he felt upon seeing a Friend in Distress, was only Fear for himself; or, upon Supposition of the Affections of Kindness and Compassion, that it was the Business of Wisdom and Virtue, to set him about extirpating them as fast as he could? And yet each of these manifest Contradictions to Nature has been laid down by Men of Speculation, as a Discovery in moral Philosophy; which they, it seems, have found out through all the specious Appearances to the contrary. This Reflection may be extended further. The Extravagancies of Enthusiasm and Superstition

SERMON. tion do not at all lie in the Road of common  
V. Sense ; and therefore so far as they are  
original Mistakes, must be owing to going  
beside or beyond it. Now, since Inquiry and  
Examination can relate only to Things so  
obscure and uncertain as to stand in need of  
it, and to Persons who are capable of it ; the  
proper Advice to be given to plain honest  
Men, to secure them from the Extremes  
both of Superstition and Irreligion, is that of  
the Son of *Sirach* : *In every good Work trust  
thy own Soul ; for this is the keeping of the  
Commandment.* \*.

Eccles. xxxii. 23.

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SERMON

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# S E R M O N VI.

## *Upon Compassion.*

Preached the first Sunday in *Lent.*

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### R O M. xii. 15.

*Rejoyce with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.*

**T**H E R E is a much more exact Correspondence between the natural and moral World, than we are apt to take Notice of. The inward Frame of Man does in a peculiar Manner answer to the external Condition and Circumstances of Life, in which he is placed. This is a particular Instance of that general Observation of the Son of Sirach: \* *All Things are double one against another, and God hath made nothing imperfect.* The several Passions and Affections in the Heart of

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Man,

\* Ecclus. xlii. 24.

SERM. Man, compared with the Circumstances of  
VI. Life in which he is placed, afford to such  
as will attend to them, as certain Instances  
of final Causes, as any whatever which are  
more commonly alledged for such: since  
those Affections lead him to a certain deter-  
minate Course of Action suitable to those  
Circumstances; as (for Instance) Compa-  
sion, to relieve the Distress'd. And as all Ob-  
servations of final Causes, drawn from the  
Principles of Action in the Heart of Man,  
compared with the Condition he is placed  
in, serve all the good Uses which Instances  
of final Causes in the material World about  
us do; and both these are equally Proofs of  
Wisdom and Design in the Author of Na-  
ture: So the former serve to further good  
Purposes; they shew us what Course of Life  
we are made for, what is our Duty, and in  
a peculiar Manner enforce upon us the Prac-  
tice of it.

S U P P O S E we are capable of Happiness  
and of Misery in Degrees equally intense  
and extreme, yet, we are capable of the latter  
for a much longer Time beyond all Com-  
parison. We see Men in the Tortures  
of Pain for Hours, Days, and, excepting  
the short Suspensions of Sleep, for Months  
together

together without Intermission; to which no Enjoyments of Life do, in Degree and Continuance, bear any sort of Proportion. And such is our Make and that of the World about us, that any thing may become the Instrument of Pain and Sorrow to us. Thus almost any one Man is capable of doing Mischief to any other, though he may not be capable of doing him Good: And if he be capable of doing him some Good, he is capable of doing him more Evil. And it is, in numberless Cases, much more in our Power to lessen the Miseries of others, than to promote their positive Happiness, any otherwise than as the former often includes the latter; Ease from Misery occasioning for some time the greatest positive Enjoyment. This Constitution of Nature, namely, that it is so much more in our Power to occasion and likewise to lessen Misery, than to promote positive Happiness, plainly required a particular Affection, to hinder us from abusing, and to incline us to make a right use of the former Powers, *i. e.* the Powers both to occasion and to lessen Misery; over and above what was necessary to induce us to make a right Use of the latter Power, that of promoting positive

SERM. Happiness. The Power we have over the  
VI. Misery of our Fellow-creatures, to occa-  
sion or lessen it, being a more important  
Trust, than the Power we have of promoting  
their positive Happiness; the former requires  
and has a further, an additional Security and  
Guard against its being violated, beyond  
and over and above what the latter has.  
The social Nature of Man, and general  
Good-will to his Species, equally prevent  
him from doing Evil, incline him to relieve  
the Distressed, and to promote the positive  
Happiness of his Fellow-creatures: But Com-  
passion only restrains from the first, and  
carries him to the second; it hath nothing to  
do with the third.

THE final Causes then of Compassion are  
to prevent and to relieve Misery.

As to the former: This Affection may  
plainly be a Restraint upon Resentment,  
Envy, unreasonable Self-love; that is, upon  
all the Principles from which Men do Evil to  
one another. Let us instance only in Re-  
sentment. It seldom happens, in regulated  
Societies, that Men have an Enemy so in-  
tirely in their Power, as to be able to sati-  
ate their Resentment with Safety. But if  
we were to put this Case, it is plainly sup-  
poseable,

posable, that a Person might bring his SERM. Enemy into such a Condition, as from being the Object of Anger and Rage, to become an Object of Compassion, even to himself, though the most malicious Man in the World: And in this Case Compassion would stop him, if he could stop with Safety, from pursuing his Revenge any farther. But since Nature has placed within us more powerful Restraints to prevent Mischief, and since the final Cause of Compassion is much more to relieve Misery, let us go on to the Consideration of it in this View.

As this World was not intended to be a State of any great Satisfaction or high Enjoyment; so neither was it intended to be a meer Scene of Unhappiness and Sorrow. Mitigations and Reliefs are provided by the merciful Author of Nature, for most of the Afflictions in Humane Life. There is kind Provision made even against our Frailities; as we are so constituted that Time abundantly abates our Sorrows, and begets in us that Resignment of Temper, which ought to have been produced by a better Cause; a due Sense of the Authority of God, and our State of Dependance. This holds in respect

SERM. respect to far the greatest Part of the Evils of  
VI. Life; I suppose, in some Degree, as to Pain  
and Sickness. Now this Part of the Con-  
stitution or Make of Man, considered as  
some Relief to Misery, and not as Provision  
for positive Happiness, is, if I may so speak,  
an Instance of Nature's Compassion for us;  
and every natural Remedy or Relief to Mi-  
sery, may be considered in the same View.

B U T since, in many Cases, it is very much  
in our Power to alleviate the Miseries of  
each other; and Benevolence, though na-  
tural in Man to Man, yet is in a very low  
Degree, kept down by Interest and Com-  
petitions; and Men, for the most Part, are so  
engaged in the Business and Pleasures of the  
World, as to overlook and turn away from  
Objects of Misery; which are plainly con-  
sidered as Interruptions to them in their  
Way, as Intruders upon their Business,  
their Gaiety and Mirth: Compassion is an  
Advocate within us in their Behalf, to gain  
the Unhappy Admittance and Access, to  
make their Case attended to. If it sometimes  
serves a contrary Purpose, and makes Men  
industriously turn away from the mi-  
serable, these are only Instances of Abuse  
and Perversion: For the End, for which the  
Affection

Affection was given us, most certainly is not SERM. to make us avoid, but to make us attend VI. to the Objects of it. And if Men would only resolve to allow thus much to it; let it bring before their View, the View of their Mind, the Miseries of their Fellow-creatures; let it gain for them that their Case be considered; I am persuaded it would not fail of gaining more, and that very few real Objects of Charity would pass unrelieved. Pain and Sorrow and Misery have a right to our Assistance: Compassion puts us in Mind of the Debt, and that we owe it to ourselves, as well as to the Distressed. For, to endeavour to get rid of the Sorrow of Compassion by turning from the Wretched, when yet it is in our Power to relieve them, is as unnatural, as to endeavour to get rid of the Pain of Hunger by keeping from the Sight of Food. That we can do one with greater Success than we can the other, is no Proof that one is less a Violation of Nature than the other. Compassion is a Call, a Demand of Nature, to relieve the Unhappy; as Hunger is a natural Call for Food. This Affection plainly gives the Objects of it an additional Claim to Relief and Mercy, over and above what our

SERM. our Fellow-creatures in common have to VI. our Good-will. Liberality and Bounty are exceedingly commendable; and a particular Distinction in such a World as this, where Men set themselves to contract their Heart, and close it to all Interests but their own. It is by no Means to be opposed to Mercy, but always accompanies it: The Distinction between them is only, that the former leads our Thoughts to a more promiscous and undistinguished Distribution of Favours; to those who are not, as well as those who are necessitous; whereas the Object of Compassion is Misery. But in the Comparison, and where there is not a Possibility of both, Mercy is to have the Preference: The Affection of Compassion manifestly leads us to this Preference. Thus, to relieve the Indigent and Distressed, to single out the Unhappy, from whom can be expected no Returns either of present Entertainment or future Service, for the Objects of our Favours; to esteem a Man's being friendless as a Recommendation; Dejection, and Incapacity of struggling through the World, as a Motive for assisting him; in a word, to consider these Circumstances of Disadvantage, which are usually thought a sufficient Reason for Neglect

Neglect and overlooking a Person, as a Motive for helping him forward: This is the Course of Benevolence which Compassion marks out and directs us to: This is that Humanity, which is so peculiarly becoming our Nature and Circumstances in this World.

To these Considerations, drawn from the Nature of Man, must be added the Reason of the Thing itself we are recommending, which accords to and shews the same. For, since it is so much more in our Power to lessen the Misery of our Fellow-creatures, than to promote their positive Happiness; in Cases where there is an Inconsistency, we shall be likely to do much more Good by setting ourselves to mitigate the former, than by endeavouring to promote the latter. Let the Competition be between the Poor and the Rich. It is easy, you will say, to see which will have the Preference. True: But the Question is, which ought to have the Preference? What Proportion is there, between the Happiness produced by doing a Favour to the Indigent, and that produced by doing the same Favour to one in easy Circumstances? It is manifest, that the Addition of a very large Estate to one who before had an Affluence, will in many Instances

SERM.  
VI.

SERMON. stances yield him less new Enjoyment or Satisfaction, than an ordinary Charity would yield to a necessitous Person. So that it is not only true, that our Nature, *i. e.* the Voice of God within us, carries us to the Exercise of Charity and Benevolence in the Way of Compassion or Mercy, preferably to any other Way; but we also manifestly discern much more Good done by the former; or, if you will allow me the Expressions, more Misery annihilated, and Happiness created. If Charity and Benevolence, and endeavouring to do Good to our Fellow-creatures, be any thing, this Observation deserves to be most seriously considered by all who have to bestow. And it holds with great Exactness, when applied to the several Degrees of greater and less Indigency throughout the various Ranks in Humane Life: The Happiness or Good produced not being in Proportion to what is bestowed, but in Proportion to this joined with the Need there was of it.

IT may perhaps be expected, that upon this Subject, Notice should be taken of Occasions, Circumstances and Characters, which seem at once to call forth Affections of different Sorts. Thus Vice may be thought

thought the Object both of Pity and Indig- SERM.  
nation: Folly, of Pity and of Laughter. VI.  
How far this is strictly true, I shall not in-  
quire; but only observe upon the Appearance,  
how much more humane it is to yield and  
give Scope to Affections, which are more di-  
rectly in Favour of, and friendly towards our  
Fellow-creatures; and that there is plainly  
much less Danger of being led wrong by  
these, than by the other.

BUT, notwithstanding all that has been  
said in Recommendation of Compassion, that  
it is most amiable, most becoming Humane  
Nature, and most useful to the World;  
yet it must be owned, that every Affection,  
as distinct from a Principle of Reason, may  
rise too high, and be beyond its just Proportion.  
And by means of this one carried too  
far, a Man throughout his Life is subject  
to much more Uneasiness than belongs to  
his Share: And in particular Instances, it  
may be in such a Degree, as to incapacitate  
him from assisting the very Person who is the  
Object of it. But, as there are some who up-  
on Principle set up for suppressing this Affec-  
tion itself as Weakness, there is also I know  
not what of Fashion on this Side; and, by  
some Means or other, the whole World al-  
most

SERM. most is run into the Extremes of Insensibility  
VI. towards the Distresses of their Fellow-crea-  
tures: So that general Rules and Exhorta-  
tions must always be on the other Side.

AND now to go on to the Uses we should make of the foregoing Reflections, the further one they lead to; and the general Temper they have a Tendency to beget in us. There being that distinct Affection implanted in the Nature of Man, tending to lessen the Miseries of Life, that particular Provision made for abating its Sorrows, more than for increasing its positive Happiness, as before explained; this may suggest to us, what should be our general Aim respecting ourselves, in our Passage through this World: Namely, to endeavour chiefly to escape Misery, keep free from Uneasiness, Pain and Sorrow, or to get Relief and Mitigation of them; to propose to ourselves Peace and Tranquility of Mind, rather than pursue after high Enjoyments. This is what the Constitution of Nature before explained, marks out as the Course we should follow, and the End we should aim at. To make Pleasure and Mirth and Jollity our Business, and be constantly hurrying about after some gay Amusement, some new

new Gratification of Sense or Appetite, to SERM. those who will consider the Nature of Man VI. and our Condition in this World, will appear the most romantick Scheme of Life that ever entered into Thought. And yet how many are there who go on in this Course, without learning better from the daily, the hourly Disappointments, Listlessness, and Satiety, which accompany this fashionable Method of wasting away their Days?

THE Subject we have been insisting upon would lead us into the same kind of Reflections, by a different Connection. The Miseries of Life brought home to ourselves by Compassion, viewed through this Affection considered as the Sense by which they are perceived, would beget in us that Moderation Humility, and Soborness of Mind, which has been now recommended; and which peculiarly belongs to a Season of Recollection, the only Purpose of which is to bring us to a just Sense of Things, to recover us out of that Forgetfulness of ourselves, and our true State, which it is manifest far the greatest Part of Men pass their whole Life in. Upon this Account Solomon says, that *it is better to go to the House of Mourning, than to go to the House of feasting.*

SERM. *feasting*, *i. e.* It is more to a Man's Advantage to turn his Eyes towards Objects of Distress, to recall sometimes to his Remembrance the Occasions of Sorrow, than to pass all his Days in thoughtless Mirth and Gaiety. And he represents the wise as choosing to frequent the former of these Places; to be sure not for its own Sake, but because *by the sadness of the Countenance the Heart is made better..* Every one observes, how temperate and reasonable Men are when humbled and brought low by Afflictions, in comparison of what they are in high Prosperity. By this voluntary Resort to the House of Mourning, which is here recommended, we might learn all those useful Instructions which Calamities teach, without undergoing them ourselves; and grow wiser and better at a more easy Rate than Men commonly do. The Objects themselves, which in that Place of Sorrow lie before our View, naturally give us a Seriousness and Attention, check that Wantonness which is the Growth of Prosperity and Ease, and lead us to reflect upon the Deficiencies of Humane Life itself; that *every Man, at his best Estate, is altogether Vanity.* This would correct the florid and gaudy Prospects and

and Expectations which we are too apt to SERM. indulge, teach us to lower our Notions of VI. Happiness and Enjoyment, bring them down to the Reality of things, to what is attainable, to what the Frailty of our Condition will admit of, which, for any Continuance, is only Tranquillity, Ease, and moderate Satisfactions. Thus we might at once become Proof against the Temptations, with which the whole World almost is carried away; since it is plain, that not only what is called a Life of Pleasure, but also vicious Pursuits in general, aim at somewhat besides and beyond these moderate Satisfactions.

AND as to that Obstinacy and Wilfulness, which renders Men so insensible to the Motives of Religion; this right Sense of ourselves and of the World about us would bend the stubborn Mind, soften the Heart, and make it more apt to receive Impression: And this is the proper Temper in which to call our Ways to Rémembrance, to review and set home upon ourselves the Mis-carriages of our past Life. In such a compliant State of Mind, Reason and Conscience will have a fair Hearing; which is the Preparation for, or rather the Beginning of

SERM. that Repentance, the outward Show of which  
VI. we all put on at this Season.

*Lastly, THE various Miseries of Life which lie before us whereever we turn our Eyes, the Frailty of this mortal State we are passing through, may put us in Mind that the present World is not our Home; that we are meerly Strangers and Travellers in it, as all our Fathers were. It is therefore to be considered as a foreign Country; in which our Poverty and Wants, and the insufficient Supplies of them were designed to turn our Views to that higher and better State we are Heirs to: A State where will be no Follies to be overlooked, no Miseries to be pitied, no Wants to be relieved; where the Affection we have been now treating of, will happily be lost, as there will be no Objects to exercise it upon: For God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes, and there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor Crying; neither shall there be any more Pain; for the former Things are passed away.*

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## S E R M O N VII.

### *Upon the Character of Balaam.*

Preached the second Sunday after *Easter.*

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N U M B. XXIII. 10.

*Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and  
let my last End be like his.*

**T**HESSE Words, taken alone, and SERM. without respect to him who spoke VII. them, lead our Thoughts immediately to the different Ends of good and bad Men. For, though the Comparison is not express'd, yet it is manifestly implied; as is also the Preference of one of these Characters to the other in that last Circumstance, Death. And, since dying the Death of the Righteous or of the Wicked, necessarily implies Men's being righteous or wicked,

## 118 A SERMON upon the

SERM. wicked, *i. e.* having lived righteously or  
VII. wickedly; a Comparison of them in their  
Lives also might come into Consideration  
from such a single View of the Words them-  
selves. But my present Design is, to con-  
sider them with a particular Reference or Re-  
spect to him who spoke them; which Re-  
ference, if you please to attend, you will  
see. And if what shall be offered to your  
Consideration at this Time, be thought a  
Discourse upon the whole History of this  
Man, rather than upon the particular Words  
I have read, this is of no Consequence: It  
is sufficient, if it afford Reflection of Use  
and Service to ourselves.'

BUT, in order to avoid Cavils respecting  
this remarkable Relation in Scripture, either  
that Part of it which you have heard in  
the first Lesson for the Day, or any other;  
let me just observe, that as this is not a Place  
for answering them, so they no way affect the  
following Discourse; since the Character  
there given is plainly a real one in Life, and  
such as there are Parallels to.

THE Occasion of *Balaam's* coming out  
of his own Country into the Land of *Moab*,  
where he pronounced this solemn Prayer  
or Wish, he himself relates in the first  
Parable

## Character of Balaam. 119

Parable or prophetick Speech, of which it is the Conclusion. In which is a Custom referr'd to, proper to be taken Notice of: That of devoting Enemies to Destruction, before the Entrance upon a War with them. This Custom appears to have prevailed over a great Part of the World; for we find it amongst the most distant Nations. The Romans had publick Officers, to whom it belonged as a stated Part of their Office. But there was somewhat more particular in the Case now before us; *Balaam* being looked upon as an extraordinary Person, whose Blessing or Curse was thought to be always effectual.

IN order to engage the Readers Attention to this Passage, the sacred Historian has enumerated the preparatory Circumstances, which are these. *Balaam* requires the King of *Moab* to build him seven Altars, and to prepare him the same Number of Oxen and of Rams. The Sacrifice being over, he retires alone to a Solitude sacred to these Occasions, there to wait the divine Inspiration or Answer, for which the foregoing Rites were the Preparation. \* *And God met*

## 120 A SERMON upon the

SERM. Balaam, and put a Word in his Mouth, up-  
VII. on receiving which, he returns back to the  
Altars ; where was the King, who had all  
this While attended the Sacrifice, as appointed ; he and all the Princes of Moab stand-  
ing, big with Expectation of the Prophet's  
Reply. \* And he took up his Parable and  
said, Balak the King of Moab hath brought  
me from Aram, out of the Mountains of  
the East, saying, come, curse me Jacob,  
and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse,  
whom God hath not cursed ? Or how shall  
I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied ?  
For from the top of the Rocks I see him,  
and from the Hills I behold him : Lo, the  
People shall dwell alone, and shall not be  
reckoned among the Nations. Who can count  
the Dust of Jacob, and the Number of the  
fourth Part of Israel ? Let me die the Death  
of the Righteous, and let my last End be like  
his.

IT is necessary, as you will see in the Pro-  
gress of this Discourse, particularly to ob-  
serve what he understood by Righteous. And  
he himself is introduced in the Book of  
Micah † explaining it ; if by Righteous is  
meant

\* Ver. 6.      † Micah vi.

meant Good, as to be sure it is. O my Peo- SERM:  
ple, remember now what Balak King of VII.  
Moab consulted, and what Balaam the Son  
of Beor answered him from Shittim unto  
Gilgal. From the mention of Shittim it  
is manifest, that it is this very Story which  
is here referred to, though another Part of  
it, the Account of which is not now extant ;  
as there are many Quotations in Scripture  
out of Books which are not come down to  
us. Remember what Balaam answered,  
that ye may know the Righteousness of the  
Lord, i. e. the Righteousness which God  
will accept. Balak demands, *Wherewith  
shall I come before the Lord, and bow my-  
self before the high God ? Shall I come be-  
fore him with Burnt-Offerings, with Calves  
of a Year old ? Will the Lord be pleased with  
thousands of Rams, or with ten thousands of  
Rivers of Oil ? Shall I give my first-born  
for my Transgression, the Fruit of my Body  
for the Sin of my Soul ? Balaam answers  
him, *He hath shewed thee, O Man, what  
is good : And what doth the Lord require  
of thee, but to do justly, and to love Mer-  
cy, and to walk humbly with thy God ?*  
Here is a good Man expressly characterized,  
as distinct from a dishonest, and a supersti-  
tious*

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SERM. tious Man. No Words can more strongly  
VII. exclude Dishonesty and Falseness of Heart,  
than *doing Justice*, and *loving Mercy*: And  
both these, as well as *walking humbly with*  
*God*, are put in Opposition to those cere-  
monial Methods of Recommendation, which  
*Balak* hoped might have served the Turn.  
From hence appears what he meant by the  
*Righteous*, whose *Death* he desires to die.

W H E T H E R it was his own Character  
shall now be enquired: And in order to de-  
termine it, we must take a View of his whole  
Behaviour upon this Occasion. When the  
Elders of *Moab* came to him, though he  
appears to have been much allured with  
the Rewards offered, yet he had such Regard  
to the Authority of *God*, as to keep the  
Messengers in Suspense until he had con-  
sulted his Will. *And God said to him* \*,  
*Thou shalt not go with them, thou shalt not*  
*curse the People, for they are blessed.* Upon  
this he dismisses the Ambassadors, with an  
absolute refusal of accompanying them back  
to their King. Thus far his Regards to his  
Duty prevailed, neither does there any  
thing appear as yet amiss in his Conduct.  
His Answer being reported to the King  
of

\* Chap. xxii. 12.

of *Moab*, a more honourable Embassy is SERM. immediately dispatched, and greater Re- VII. wards proposed. Then the Iniquity of his Heart began to disclose itself. A thorough honest Man would without Hesitation have repeated his former Answer, that he could not be guilty of so infamous a Prostitution of the sacred Character with which he was invested, as in the Name of a Prophet to curse those whom he knew to be blessed. But instead of this, which was the only honest Part in these Circumstances that lay before him, he desires the Princes of *Moab* to tarry that Night with him also; and for the Sake of the Reward deliberates, whether by some Means or other he might not be able to obtain Leave to curse *Israel*; to do that, which had been before revealed to him to be contrary to the Will of God, which yet he resolves not to do without that Permission. Upon which, as when this Nation afterwards rejected God from reigning over them, he gave them a King in his Anger; in the same Way, as appears from other Parts of the Narration, he gives *Balaam* the Permission he desired: For this is the most natural Sense of the Words. Arriving in the Territories of *Moab*, and being received

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SERM. received with particular Distinction by the  
VII. King, and He repeating in Person the Pro-  
mise of the Rewards he had before made  
to him by his Ambassadors: He seeks, the  
Text says, by *Sacrifices* and *Enchantments*,  
(what these were is not to our Purpose) to  
obtain Leave of God to curse the People;  
keeping still his Resolution, not to do it  
without that Permission: Which not being  
able to obtain, he had such Regard to the  
Command of God, as to keep this Resolu-  
tion to the last. The Supposition of his be-  
ing under a supernatural Restraint is a meer  
Fiction of *Philo*: He is plainly represented  
to be under no other Force or Restraint, than  
the Fear of God. However, he goes on per-  
severing in that Endeavour, after he had de-  
clared, that *God had not beheld Iniquity in*  
*Jacob, neither had he seen Perverseness in*  
*Israel* \* *i. e.* they were a People of Virtue  
and Piety, so far as not to have drawn down,  
by their Iniquity, that Curse which he was  
solliciting Leave to pronounce upon them.  
So that the State of *Balaam's* Mind was  
this: He wanted to do what he knew to be  
very wicked, and contrary to the express  
Command

\* Ver. 21.

Command of God ; he had inward Checks SERM.  
and Restraints, which he could not intirely VII.  
get over ; he therefore casts about for Ways  
to reconcile this Wickedness with his Duty.  
How great a Paradox soever this may appear,  
as it is indeed a Contradiction in Terms, it is  
the very Account which the Scripture gives  
us of him.

B U T there is a more surprizing Piece of Iniquity yet behind. Not daring in his religious Character, as a Prophet, to assist the King of *Moab*, he considers whether there might not be found some other Means of assisting him against that very People, whom he himself by the Fear of God was restrained from cursing in Words. One would not think it possible, that the Weakness, even of religious Self-deceit in its utmost Excess, could have so poor a Distinction, so fond an Evasion, to serve itself of. But so it was : And he could think of no other Method, than to betray the Children of *Israel* to provoke his Wrath, who was their only Strength and Defence. The Temptation which he pitched upon, was that concerning which *Solomon* afterwards observed, that it had *cast down many wounded* ; yea, *many strong Men had been slain by it* :

And

SERM. And of which he himself was a sad Example,  
VII. when *his Wives turned away his Heart after*  
VVV *other Gods.* This succeeded: The People  
sin against God; and thus the Prophet's  
Counsel brought on that Destruction, which  
he could by no Means be prevailed upon to  
assist with the religious Ceremony of Execra-  
tion, which the King of *Moab* thought would  
itself have effected it. Their Crime and  
Punishment are related in *Deuteronomy* \*,  
and *Numbers* †. And from the Relation  
repeated in *Numbers* (a), it appears, that  
*Balaam* was the Contriver of the whole Mat-  
ter. It is also ascribed to him in *the Revela-*  
*tion* (b), where he is said to have *taught Ba-*  
*lak to cast a stumbling-block before the Children*  
*of Israel.*

THIS was the Man, this *Balaam*, I say,  
was the Man who desired to *die the Death*  
*of the Righteous*, and that his *last End*  
*might be like his*: And this was the State  
of his Mind, when he pronounced these  
Words.

So that the Object we have now before  
us is the most astonishing in the World: A  
very wicked Man, under a deep Sense of  
God

\* Chap. iv. † Chap. xxv. (a) Chap. xxxi. (b) Chap. ii.

God and Religion, persisting still in his SERM. Wickedness, and preferring the Wages of VII. Unrighteousness, even when he had before him a lively View of Death, and that approaching Period of his Days, which should deprive him of all those Advantages for which he was prostituting himself; and likewise a Prospect, whether certain or uncertain, of a future State of Retribution: All this joined with an explicit ardent Wish, that, when he was to leave this World, he might be in the Condition of a righteous Man. Good God, what Inconsistency, what Perplexity is here! With what different Views of Things, with what contradictory Principles of Action, must such a Mind be torn and distracted! It was not unthinking Carelessness, by which he run on headlong in Vice and Folly, without ever making a stand to ask himself what he was doing: No; he acted upon the cool Motives of Interest and Advantage. Neither was he totally hard and callous to Impressions of Religion, what we call abandoned; for he absolutely denied to curse *Israel*. When Reason assumes her Place, when convinced of his Duty, when he owns and feels, and is actually under the Influence of the divine Authority;

SERM. Authority ; whilst he is carrying on his  
VII. Views to the Grave, the End of all temporal  
Greatness ; under this Sense of Things,  
with the better Character and more desir-  
able State present—full before him—in his  
Thoughts, in his Wishes, voluntarily to  
choose the worse—What Fatality is here !  
Or how otherwise can such a Character be  
explained ? And yet, strange as it may ap-  
pear, it is not altogether an uncommon one :  
Nay, with some small Alterations, and put  
a little lower, it is applicable, to a very con-  
siderable Part of the World. For, if the  
reasonable Choice be seen and acknow-  
ledged, and yet Men make the unreasonable  
one, is not this the same Contradiction ;  
that very Inconsistency, which appeared so  
unaccountable ?

To give some little Opening to such Char-  
acters and Behaviour, it is to be observed  
in general, that there is no Account to be  
given in the Way of Reason, of Men's so  
strong Attachments to the present World :  
Our Hopes and Fears and Pursuits are in De-  
grees beyond all Proportion to the known  
Value of the Things they respect. This may  
be said without taking into Consideration  
Religion and a future State ; and when these  
are

are considered, the Disproportion is infinite- SERM.  
ly heightened. Now when Men go against VII.  
their Reason, and contradict a more im-  
portant Interest at a Distance, for one nearer,  
though of less Consideration; if this be the  
Whole of the Case, all that can be said is,  
that strong Passions, some kind of brute  
Force within, prevails over the Principle of  
Rationality. However, if this be with a  
clear, full and distinct View of the Truth of  
Things, then it is doing the utmost Violence  
to Themselves, acting in the most palpa-  
ble Contradiction to their very Nature. But if  
there be any such Thing in Mankind, as put-  
ting Half-deceits upon themselves; which  
there plainly is, either by avoiding Reflection,  
or (if they do reflect) by religious Equivo-  
cation, Subterfuges, and palliating Matters  
to themselves; by these Means Conscience  
may be laid asleep, and they may go on in  
a Course of Wickedness with less Distur-  
bance. All the various Turns, Doubles, and  
Intricacies in a dishonest Heart, cannot be  
unfolded or laid open; but that there is  
somewhat of that Kind is manifest, be it to  
be called Self-deceit, or by any other Name.  
*Balaam* had before his Eyes the Authority of  
God, absolutely forbidding him what he, for

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SERM. the Sake of a Reward, had the strongest Inclination to: He was likewise in a State of Mind sober enough to consider Death and his last End: By these Considerations he was restrained, first from going to the King of *Moab*; and after he did go, from cursing *Israel*. But notwithstanding this, there was great Wickedness in his Heart. He could not forego the Rewards of Unrighteousness: He therefore first seeks for Indulgences; and when these could not be obtained, he sins against the whole Meaning, End and Design of the Prohibition, which no Consideration in the World could prevail with him to go against the Letter of. And surely that impious Counsel, he gave to *Balak* against the Children of *Israel*, was, considered in itself, a greater Piece of Wickedness, than if he had cursed them in Words.

If it be inquired what his Situation, his Hopes and Fears were, in respect to this his Wish: The Answer must be, that Consciousness of the Wickedness of his Heart must necessarily have destroyed all settled Hopes of dying the Death of the Righteous: He could have no calm Satisfaction in this View of his last End: Yet, on the other hand, it is possible that those partial Regards

gards to his Duty, now mentioned, might SERM.  
keep him from perfect Despair. VII.

U P O N the Whole, it is manifest that *Balaam* had the most just and true Notions of God and Religion ; as appears, partly from the original Story itself, and more plainly from the Passage in *Micah* ; where he explains Religion to consist in real Virtue and real Piety, expressly distinguished from Superstition, and in Terms which most strongly exclude Dishonesty and Falseness of Heart. Yet you see his Behaviour : He seeks Indulgences for plain Wickedness ; which not being able to obtain, he gloses over that same Wickedness, dresses it up in a new Form, in order to make it pass off more easily with himself. That is, he deliberately contrives to deceive and impose upon himself, in a Matter which he knew to be of the utmost Importance.

T o bring these Observations home to ourselves : It is too evident that many Persons allow themselves in very unjustifiable Courses, who yet make great Pretences to Religion ; not to deceive the World, none can be so weak as to think this will pass in our Age ; but from Principles, Hopes, and Fears, respecting God and a future State ;

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SERM. and go on thus with a sort of Tranquil-  
VII. lity and Quiet of Mind. This cannot be  
upon a thorough Consideration, and full  
Resolution, that the Pleasures and Advan-  
tages they propose are to be pursued at all  
Hazards, against Reason, against the Law of  
God, and though everlasting Destruction is  
to be the Consequence. This would be do-  
ing too great Violence upon themselves.  
No, they are for making a Composition  
with the Almighty. These of his Com-  
mands they will obey: But as to others—  
why they will make all the Atonements in  
their Power; the ambitious, the covetous,  
the dissolute Man, each in a Way which  
shall not contradict his respective Pursuit.  
Indulgences before, which was *Balaam's*  
first Attempt, though he was not so success-  
ful in it as to deceive himself, or Atonements  
afterwards, are all the same. And here  
perhaps come in faint Hopes that they may,  
and Half-resolves that they will, one Time or  
other, make a Change.

BESIDES these, there are also Persons,  
who from a more just Way of considering  
Things, see the infinite Absurdity of This, of  
substituting Sacrifice instead of Obedience;  
there are Persons far enough from Super-  
stition,

stitution, and not without some real Sense of SERM.  
God and Religion upon their Minds; who VII.  
yet are guilty of most unjustifiable Practices,  
and go on with great Coolness and Com-  
mand over themselves. The same Dishonesty  
and Unsoundness of Heart discovers itself  
in These another Way. In all common or-  
dinary Cases we see intuitively at first View  
what is our Duty, what is the honest Part.  
This is the Ground of the Observation, that  
the first Thought is often the best. In these  
Cases Doubt and Deliberation is itself Dis-  
honesty; as it was in *Balaam* upon the  
second Message. That which is called con-  
sidering what is our Duty in a particular Case,  
is very often nothing but endeavouring to  
explain it away. Thus those Courses, which,  
if Men would fairly attend to the Dictates  
of their own Consciences, they would see  
to be Corruption, Excess, Oppression, Un-  
charitableness; these are refined upon—  
Things were so and so circumstantiated—  
Great Difficulties are raised about fixing  
Bounds and Degrees: And thus every moral  
Obligation whatever may be evaded. Here  
is Scope, I say, for an unfair Mind to ex-  
plain away every moral Obligation to it-  
self. Whether Men reflect again upon

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SERM. this internal Management and Artifice, and  
VII. how explicit they are with themselves, is  
another Question. There are many Operations  
of the Mind, many Things pass within,  
which we never reflect upon again; which  
a By-stander, from having frequent Opportunities  
of observing us and our Conduct,  
may make shrewd Guesses at.

THAT great Numbers are in this Way of  
deceiving themselves is certain. There is  
scarce a Man in the World, who has intirely  
got over all Regards, Hopes and Fears, con-  
cerning God and a future State; and these  
Apprehensions in the Generality, bad as we  
are, prevail in considerable Degrees: Yet  
Men will and can be wicked, with Calm-  
ness and Thought; we see they are. There  
must therefore be some Method of making  
it fit a little easy upon their Minds; which,  
in the Superstitious, is those Indulgences and  
Atonements before mentioned, and this  
Self-deceit of another kind in Persons of  
another Character. And both these pro-  
ceed from a certain Unfairness of Mind, a  
peculiar inward Dishonesty; the direct con-  
trary to that Simplicity which our Saviour  
recommends, under the Notion of *becoming  
little Children*, as a necessary Qualification  
for

for our entering into the Kingdom of SERM.  
Heaven. VII.

But to conclude: How much soever Men differ in the Course of Life they prefer, and in their Ways of palliating and excusing their Vices to themselves; yet all agree in the one Thing, desiring to *die the Death of the Righteous*. This is surely remarkable. The Observation may be extended further, and put thus: Even without determining what that is which we call Guilt or Innocence, there is no Man but would choose, after having had the Pleasure or Advantage of a vicious Action, to be free of the Guilt of it, to be in the State of an innocent Man. This shews at least the Disturbance, and implicit Dissatisfaction in Vice. If we enquire into the Grounds of it, we shall find it proceeds partly from an immediate Sense of having done Evil; and partly from an Apprehension, that this inward Sense shall one Time or another be seconded by an higher Judgment, upon which our whole Being depends. Now to suspend and drown this Sense, and these Apprehensions, be it by the Hurry of Busines or of Pleasure, or by Superstition, or moral Equivocations, this is in a Manner one and the same, and makes

SERM. no Alteration at all in the Nature of our  
VII. Case. Things and Actions are what they  
are, and the Consequences of them will be  
what they will be: Why then should we de-  
sire to be deceived? As we are reasonable  
Creatures, and have any Regard to ourselves,  
we ought to lay these Things plainly and ho-  
nestly before our Mind, and upon this, act as  
you please, as you think most fit; make that  
Choice and prefer that Course of Life, which  
you can justify to yourselves, and which fits  
most easy upon your own Mind. It will  
immediately appear, that Vice cannot be the  
Happiness, but must upon the whole be  
the Misery, of such a Creature as Man; a  
Moral, an Accountable Agent. Supersti-  
tious Observances, Self-Deceit though of a  
more refined Sort, will not in reality at all  
mend Matters with us. And the Result of  
the whole can be nothing else, but that  
with Simplicity and Fairness we *keep Inno-  
cency, and take heed unto the Thing that is  
right; for this alone shall bring a Man Peace at  
the last.*

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# SERMON VIII.

## *Upon Resentment.*

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M A T T H. V. 43, 44.

*Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thine Enemy : But I say unto you, Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do Good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.*

**S**INCE perfect Goodness in the Deity is the Principle, from whence the Universe was brought into Being, and by which it is preserved ; and since general Benevolence is the great Law of the whole moral Creation : It is a Question which immediately occurs, *Why had Man implanted in him a Principle, which appears the direct Contrary to Benevolence ?* Now the

S E R M.  
VIII.  
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Foot

SERM. Foot upon which Inquiries of this Kind.  
VIII. should be treated is this: To take Humane  
Nature as it is, and the Circumstances in  
which it is placed as they are; and then con-  
sider the Correspondence between that Na-  
ture and those Circumstances, or what Course  
of Action and Behaviour, respecting those  
Circumstances, any particular Affection or  
Passion leads us to. This I mention to distin-  
guish the Matter now before us from Dis-  
quisitions of quite another Kind; namely,  
*Why we are not made more perfect Crea-  
tures, or placed in better Circumstances?*  
These being Questions which we have not,  
that I know of, any thing at all to do with.  
God Almighty undoubtedly foresaw the Dis-  
orders, both natural and moral, which would  
happen in this State of Things. If upon this  
we set ourselves to search and examine, why  
he did not prevent them; we shall, I am  
afraid, be in Danger of running into some-  
what worse than impertinent Curiosity. But  
upon this to examine, how far the Nature  
which he hath given us hath a Respect to  
those Circumstances, such as they are; how  
far it leads us to act a proper part in them;  
plainly belongs to us: And such Inquiries  
are in many Ways of excellent Use. Thus the  
Thing

Thing to be considered is, not, *Why we were SERM.  
not made of such a Nature, and placed in VIII.  
such Circumstances, as to have no need of  
so harsh and turbulent a Passion as Resent-  
ment*: But, taking our Nature and Condition as being what they are, *Why or for what  
End such a Passion was given us*: And this chiefly in order to shew, what are the Abuses of it.

THE Persons who laid down for a Rule, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour and hate, thine Enemy*, made short Work with this Matter. They did not, it seems, perceive any thing to be disapproved in Hatred, more than in Good-will: And, according to their System of Morals, our Enemy was the proper natural Object of one of these Passions, as our Neighbour was of the other of them.

This was all they had to say, and all they thought needful to be said, upon the Subject. But this cannot be satisfactory; because Hatred, Malice and Revenge, are directly contrary to the Religion we profess, and to the Nature and Reason of the Thing itself. Therefore, since no Passion God hath endued us with can be in itself Evil; and yet since Men frequently indulge a Passion in such Ways and Degrees that at length it becomes quite another

SERM. nother Thing from what it was originally in VIII. our Nature ; and those Vices of Malice and Revenge in particular take their Occasion from the natural Passion of Resentment : It will be needful to trace This up to its original, that we may see, *What it is in itself, as placed in our Nature by its Author* ; from which it will plainly appear, *For what Ends it was placed there*. And when we know what the Passion is in itself, and the Ends of it, we shall easily see, *What are the Abuses of it, in which Malice and Revenge consist* ; and which are so strongly forbidden in the Text, by the direct Contrary being commanded.

RESENTMENT is of two Kinds : *Hasty and sudden, or settled and deliberate*. The former is called Anger, and often *Passion* ; which, though a general Word, is frequently appropriated and confined to the particular Feeling, sudden Anger, as distinct from deliberate Resentment, Malice and Revenge. In all these Words is usually implied somewhat vicious ; somewhat unreasonable as to the Occasion of the Passion, or immoderate as to the Degree or Duration of it. But that the natural Passion itself is indifferent, St. Paul has asserted in that Precept, *Be ye angry and*

and sin not \* : Which though it is by no Means to be understood as an Encouragement to indulge ourselves in Anger, the Sense being certainly this, *Though ye be angry, sin not* ; yet here is evidently a Distinction made, between Anger and Sin ; between the natural Passion, and sinful Anger.

*Sudden Anger*, upon certain Occasions, is meer Instinct : As meerly so, as the Disposition to close our Eyes upon the Apprehension of somewhat falling into them ; and no more necessarily implies any Degree of Reason. I say, *necessarily* : For to be sure *hasty*, as well as *deliberate*, Anger may be occasioned by Injury or Contempt ; in which Cases Reason suggests to our Thoughts that Injury and Contempt, which is the Occasion of the Passion : But I am speaking of the former only so far as it is to be distinguished from the latter. The only Way, in which our Reason and Understanding can raise Anger, is by representing to our Mind Injustice or Injury of some Kind or other. Now momentary Anger is frequently raised, not only without any real, but without any apparent Reason ; that is, without any Appearance of Injury, as distinct from Hurt or Pain.

It

\* Ephes. iv. 26.

SER. It cannot, I suppose, be thought that this  
VIII. Passion, in Infants; in the lower Species of  
Animals; and which is often seen, in Men  
towards them; it cannot, I say, be imagined  
that these Instances of this Passion are the  
Effect of Reason: No, they are occasioned  
by meer Sensation and Feeling. It is Oppo-  
sition, sudden Hurt, Violence, which na-  
turally excites the Passion; and the real De-  
merit or Fault of him who offers that Vi-  
olence, or is the Cause of that Opposition or  
Hurt, does not in many Cases so much as  
come into Thought.

THE Reason and End, for which Man was  
made thus liable to this Passion, is, that he  
might be better qualified to prevent, and like-  
wise (or perhaps chiefly) to resist and defeat,  
sudden Force, Violence and Opposition, con-  
sidered meerly as such, and without Regard to  
the Fault or Demerit of him who is the Au-  
thor of them. Yet, since Violence may be  
considered in this other and further View,  
as implying Fault; and since Injury, as distinct  
from Harm, may raise sudden Anger; sud-  
den Anger may likewise accidentally serve  
to prevent, or remedy, such Fault and Injury.  
But, considered as distinct from settled Anger,  
it stands in our Nature for Self-defence, and

not for the Administration of Justice. There are plainly Cases, and in the uncultivated Parts of the World, and, where regular Governments are not formed, they frequently happen, in which there is no Time for Consideration, and yet to be passive is certain Destruction ; in which, sudden Resistance is the only Security.

SERM. VIII.



But from *This*, deliberate Anger or *Resentment* is essentially distinguished, as the latter is not naturally excited by, or intended to prevent meer Harm without Appearance of Wrong or Injustice. Now, in order to see, as exactly as we can, what is the natural Object and Occasion of such *Resentment* ; let us reflect upon the Manner in which we are touched with Reading, suppose, a feigned Story of Baseness and Villany, properly worked up to move our Passions. This immediately raises Indignation, somewhat of a Desire that it should be punished. And though the designed Injury be prevented, yet that it was designed is sufficient to raise this inward Feeling. Suppose the Story true, this inward Feeling would be as natural and as just : And one may venture to affirm, that there is scarce a Man in the World, but would have it upon some Occasions. It seems in

SERM. us plainly connected with a Sense of Virtue  
VIII. and Vice, of moral Good and Evil. Suppose  
further, we knew both the Person who did,  
and who suffered the Injury : Neither would  
this make any Alteration, only that it would  
probably affect us more. The Indignation  
raised by Cruelty and Injustice, and the De-  
sire of having it punished, which Persons un-  
concerned would feel, is by no Means Ma-  
lice. No, it is Resentment against Vice and  
Wickedness : It is one of the common Bonds,  
by which Society is held together ; a Fellow-  
feeling which each Individual has in Behalf  
of the whole Species, as well as of him-  
self. And it does not appear that This, gene-  
rally speaking, is at all too high amongst  
Mankind. Suppose now the Injury I have  
been speaking of, to be done against our-  
selves ; or those whom we consider as our-  
selves. It is plain, the Way, in which we  
should be affected, would be exactly the same  
in Kind : but it would certainly be in a higher  
Degree, and less transient ; because a Sense  
of our own Happiness and Misery is most in-  
timately and always present to us ; and  
from the very Constitution of our Nature,  
we cannot but have a greater Sensibility to,  
and be more deeply interested in, what con-  
cerns

cerns ourselves. And this seems to be the whole of this Passion which is, properly speaking, natural to Mankind: Namely, a Resentment against Injury and Wickedness in general; and in a higher Degree when towards ourselves, in Proportion to the greater Regard which Men naturally have for themselves, than for others. From hence it appears, that it is not natural, but moral Evil; it is not Suffering, but Injury, which raises that Anger and Resentment, which is of any Continuance. The natural Object of it is not one, who appears to the suffering Person to have been only the innocent Occasion of his Pain or Loss; but one, who has been in a moral Sense injurious either to ourselves or others. This is abundantly confirmed by observing, what it is which heightens or lessens Resentment; namely, the same which aggravates or lessens the Fault: Friendship and former Obligations, on one hand; or Inadvertency, strong Temptations and Mistake, on the other. All this is so much understood by Mankind, how little soever it be reflected upon, that a Person would be reckoned quite distracted, who should coolly resent an Harm, which had not to himself the Appearance of Injury or Wrong. Men do

L indeed

SERM. indeed resent what is occasioned through  
VIII. Carelessness : But when they expect Obser-  
vance at their due, and so that Carelessness is  
considered as faulty. It is likewise true, that  
they resent more strongly an Injury done,  
than one which, though designed, was pre-  
vented, in Cases where the Guilt is perhaps  
the same: The Reason however is, not that  
bare Pain or Loss raises Resentment, but, that  
it gives a new, and, as I may speak, additional  
Sense of the Injury or Injustice. According  
to the natural Course of the Passions, the De-  
grees of Resentment are in Proportion, not  
only to the Degree of Design and Delibera-  
tion in the injurious Person ; but in Proportion  
to this, joined with the Degree of the  
Evil designed or premeditated ; since this  
likewise comes in to make the Injustice  
greater or less. And the Evil and Harm will  
appear greater when they feel it, than when  
they only reflect upon it : So therefore will  
the Injury: And consequently the Resent-  
ment will be greater.

THE natural Object or Occasion of set-  
tled Resentment then being Injury, as distinct  
from Pain or Loss ; it is easy to see, that  
to prevent and to remedy such Injury, and  
the Miseries arising from it, is the End for  
which

which this Passion was implanted in Man. SERM. It is to be considered as a Weapon, put into VIII. our Hands by Nature, against Injury, Injustice and Cruelty: How it may be innocently employed and made use of, shall presently be mentioned.

THE Account, which has been now given of this Passion, is in brief, that sudden Anger is raised by, and was chiefly intended to prevent or remedy, mere Harm distinct from Injury: But that it *may* be raised by Injury, and *may* serve to prevent or to remedy it; and then the Occasions and Effects of it are the same, with the Occasions and Effects of deliberate Anger. But they are essentially distinguished in this, that the latter is never occasioned by Harm, distinct from Injury; and its natural proper End is to remedy or prevent only that Harm, which implies, or is supposed to imply, Injury or moral Wrong. Every one sees that these Observations do not relate to those, who have habitually suppressed the Course of their Passions and Affections, out of Regard either to Interest or Virtue; or who, from Habits of Vice and Folly, have changed their Nature. But, I suppose, there can be no doubt but this, now described, is the general Course of Resent-

SERM. ment, considered as a natural Passion, neither  
VIII. increased by Indulgence, nor corrected by  
~~~ Virtue, nor prevailed over by other Passions,  
or particular Habits of Life.

As to the Abuses of Anger, which it is to be observed may be in all different Degrees, the first which occurs is what is commonly called *Passion*; to which some Men are liable, in the same Way or others are to the *Epilepsie*, or any sudden particular Disorder. This Distemper of the Mind seizes them upon the least Occasion in the World, and perpetually without any real Reason at all: And by Means of it they are plainly, every Day, every waking Hour of their Lives, liable and in Danger of running into the most extravagant Outrages. Of a less boisterous, but not of a less innocent Kind, is *Peevishness*; which I mention with Pity, with real Pity to the unhappy Creatures, who, from their inferior Station, or other Circumstances and Relations, are obliged to be in the Way of, and to serve for a Supply to it. Both these, for ought that I can see, are one and the same Principle: But, as it takes Root in Minds of different Makes, it appears differently, and so is come to be distinguished by different Names. That  
which

which in a more feeble Temper is Peevishness, and languidly discharges itself upon every Thing which comes in its Way ; the same Principle, in a Temper of greater Force and stronger Passions, becomes Rage and Fury. In one, the Humour discharges itself at once ; in the other, it is continually discharging. This is the Account of *Passion* and *Peevishness*, as distinct from each other, and appearing in different Persons. It is no Objection against the Truth of it, that they are both to be seen sometimes in one and the same Person.

WITH respect to deliberate Resentment, the chief Instances of Abuse are : When, from Partiality to ourselves, we imagine an Injury done us, when there is none : When this Partiality represents it to us greater than it really is : When we fall into that extravagant and monstrous Kind of Resentment, towards one who has innocently been the Occasion of Evil to us ; that is, Resentment upon Account of Pain or Inconvenience, without Injury ; which is the same Absurdity, as settled Anger at a Thing that is inanimate : When the Indignation against Injury and Injustice rises too high, and is beyond Proportion to the particular ill Action it is exer-

SER. cised upon : Or lastly, when Pain or Harm of  
VIII. any Kind is inflicted merely in Consequence  
of, and to gratify, that Resentment, though  
naturally raised.

IT would be endless to descend into and explain all the Peculiarities of Perverseness, and wayward Humour, which might be traced up to this Passion. But there is one Thing, which so generally belongs to and accompanies all Excess and Abuse of it, as to require being mentioned : a certain Determination, and resolute Bent of Mind, not to be convinced or set right ; though it be ever so plain, that there is no Reason for the Displeasure, that it was raised merely by Error or Misunderstanding. In this there is doubtless a great Mixture of Pride ; but there is somewhat more, which I cannot otherwise express than, that Resentment has taken Possession of the Temper and of the Mind, and will not quit its Hold. It would be too minute, to inquire whether this be any thing more than bare Obstinacy : It is sufficient to observe, that it, in a very particular Manner and Degree, belongs to the Abuses of this Passion.

BUT, notwithstanding all these Abuses,  
" Is not just Indignation against Cruelty and  
" Wrong, one of the *Instruments of Death*  
" which

“ which the Author of our Nature hath pro- SERM.  
“ vided? Are not Cruelty, Injustice and VIII.  
“ Wrong, the natural Objects of that Indig-  
“ nation? Surely then it may one Way or  
“ other be innocently employed against them.”

True. Since therefore it is necessary for the very Subsistence of the World, that Injury, Injustice and Cruelty, should be punished; and since Compassion, which is so natural to Mankind, would render that Execution of Justice exceedingly difficult and uneasy; Indignation against Vice and Wickedness is, and may be allowed to be, a Ballance to that Weakness of Pity, and also to any thing else which would prevent the necessary Methods of Severity. Those, who have never thought upon these Subjects, may perhaps not see the Weight of this: But let us suppose a Person guilty of Murther, or any other Action of Cruelty, and that Mankind had naturally no Indignation against such Wickedness and the Authors of it; but that every Body was affected towards such a Criminal in the same Way, as towards an innocent Man: Compassion, amongst other Things, would render the Execution of Justice exceedingly painful and difficult, and would often quite prevent it. And notwithstanding that the

SERM. Principle of Benevolence is denied by some,  
VIII. and is really in a very low Degree, that Men  
are in great Measure insensible to the Happiness  
of their Fellow-creatures; yet they are  
not insensible to their Misery, but are very  
strongly moved with it: Insomuch that there  
plainly is Occasion for that Feeling which is  
raised by Guilt and Demerit, as a Ballance to  
that of Compassion. Thus much may I think  
justly be allowed to Resentment, in the strict-  
est Way of Moral Consideration.

THE good Influence which this Passion  
has in Fact upon the Affairs of the World, is  
obvious to every one's Notice. Men are  
plainly restrained from injuring their Fellow-  
creatures by Fear of their Resentment; and  
it is very happy that they are so, when they  
would not be restrained by a Principle of Vir-  
tue. And after an Injury is done, and there is a  
Necessity that the Offender should be brought  
to Justice; the cool Consideration of Reason,  
that the Security and Peace of Society re-  
quires Examples of Justice should be made,  
might indeed be sufficient to procure Laws  
to be enacted, and Sentence pass'd: But is it  
that cool Reflection in the injured Person,  
which, for the most Part, brings the Offended  
to Justice? Or is it not Resentment and In-  
dignation

dignation against the Injury and the Author of it? I am afraid there is no Doubt, which is commonly the Case. This however is to be considered as a good Effect, notwithstanding it were much to be wished that Men would act from a better Principle, Reason and cool Reflection.

THE Account now given of the Passion of Resentment, as distinct from all the Abuses of it, may suggest to our Thoughts the following Reflections.

*First*, That Vice is indeed of ill-desert, and must finally be punished. Why should Men dispute concerning the Reality of Virtue, and whether it be founded in the Nature of Things, which yet surely is not Matter of Question; but why should this, I say, be disputed, when every Man carries about him this Passion, which affords him Demonstration, that the Rules of Justice and Equity are to be the Guide of his Actions? For every Man naturally feels an Indignation upon seeing Instances of Villany and Baseness, and therefore cannot commit the same without being self-condemned.

*Secondly*, That we should learn to be cautious lest we *charge God foolishly*, by ascribing That to him, or the Nature he has given

SERM.

VIII.



SER. ven us, which is owing wholly to our own  
VIII. Abuse of it. Men may speak of the Dege-  
~ neracy and Corruption of the World, accord-  
ing to the Experience they have had of it ;  
but Human Nature, considered as the divine  
Workmanship, should methinks be treated  
as sacred : For *in the Image of God made He*  
*Man.* That Passion, from whence Men take  
Occasion to run into the dreadful Vices of  
Malice and Revenge ; even That Passion, as  
implanted in our Nature by God, is not only  
innocent, but a generous Movement of  
Mind. It is in itself, and in its Original, no  
more than Indignation against Injury and  
Wickedness : That which is the only Defor-  
mity in the Creation, and the only reasona-  
ble Object of Abhorrence and Dislike. How  
manifold Evidence have we of the divine  
Wisdom and Goodness, when even Pain in  
the natural World, and the Passion, we have  
been now considering in the Moral, come  
out Instances of it !

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## SERMON IX.

### *Upon Forgiveness of Injuries.*

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M A T T H. V. 43, 44.

*Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thine Enemy: But I say unto you, Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do Good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.*

**A**S God Almighty foresaw the Irregularities and Disorders, both natural and moral, which would happen in this State of Things; He hath graciously made some Provision against them, by giving us several Passions and Affections, which arise from, or whose Objects are those Disorders. Of this Sort are Fear, Resentment, Compassion and others; of which there could be

SER. IX.

SERM. be no Occasion or Use in a perfect State: But  
IX. in the present we should be exposed to greater  
Inconveniences without them; though there  
are very considerable ones, which they them-  
selves are the Occasions of. They are In-  
cumbrances indeed, but such as we are obli-  
ged to carry about with us, through this va-  
rious Journey of Life: Some of them as a  
Guard against the violent Assaults of others,  
and in our own Defence; some in Behalf of  
others; and all of them to put us upon, and  
help to carry us through a Course of Behavi-  
our suitable to our Condition, in Default of  
that Perfection of Wisdom and Virtue, which  
would be in all Respects our better Security.

THE Passion of Anger or Resentment hath  
already been largely treated of. It hath been  
shown, that Mankind naturally feel some  
Emotion of Mind, against Injury and Injustice,  
whoever are the Sufferers by it; and even  
though the injurious Design be prevented  
from taking Effect. Let this be called Anger,  
Indignation, Resentment, or by whatever  
Name any one shall chuse; the Thing itself is  
understood, and is plainly natural. It has like-  
wise been observed, that this natural Indigna-  
tion is generally moderate and low enough in  
Mankind, in each particular Man, when the

Injury

Injury which excites it, doth not affect himself, S E R M. or one whom he considers as himself. There- IX. fore the Precepts to *forgive*, and to *love our* *Enemies*, do not relate to that general Indignation against Injury and the Authors of it, but to this Feeling, or Resentment when raised by private or personal Injury. But no Man could be thought in earnest, who should assert, that, though Indignation against Injury, when Others are the Sufferers, is innocent and just ; yet the same Indignation against it, when we ourselves are the Sufferers, becomes faulty and blameable. These Precepts therefore cannot be understood to forbid This in the latter Case, more than in the former. Nay they cannot be understood to forbid this Feeling in the latter Case, tho' raised to a higher Degree, than in the former : Because, as was also observed further, from the very Constitution of our Nature, we cannot but have a greater Sensibility to what concerns ourselves. Therefore the Precepts in the Text, and others of the like Import with them, must be understood to forbid only the Excess and Abuse of this natural Feeling, in Cases of personal and private Injury : The chief Instances of which Excess and Abuse have likewise been already remarked ;

SERM. marked ; and all of them, excepting that of  
IX. Retaliation, do so plainly in the very Terms  
express somewhat unreasonable, disproportionate and absurd, as to admit of no Pretence  
or Shadow of Justification.

But since Custom and false Honour are  
on the Side of Retaliation and Revenge, when  
the Resentment is natural and just ; and Rea-  
sons are sometimes offered in Justification of  
Revenge in these Cases ; and since Love of  
our Enemies is thought *too hard a Saying* to  
be obeyed : I will shew *the absolute unlaw-  
fulness of the former* ; *The Obligations we are  
under to the latter* ; And then proceed to  
*some Reflections, which may have a more direct  
and immediate Tendency to beget in us a right  
Temper of Mind towards those who have offended  
us.*

IN shewing the Unlawfulness of Revenge,  
it is not my present Design to examine what  
is alledged in Favour of it, from the Tyranny  
of Custom and false Honour, but only  
to consider the Nature and Reason of the  
Thing itself ; which ought to have pre-  
vented, and ought now to extirpate, every  
Thing of that Kind.

*First,* Let us begin with the Supposition of  
That being innocent, which is pleaded for,  
and

and which shall be shewn to be altogether vicious, the Supposition that we were allowed to *render Evil for Evil*, and see what would be the Consequence. Malice or Resentment towards any Man hath plainly a Tendency to beget the same Passion in him who is the Object of it ; and this again increases it in the Other. It is of the very Nature of this Vice to propagate itself not only by way of Example, which it does in common with other Vices, but in a peculiar Way of its own ; for Resentment itself, as well as what is done in Consequence of it, is the Object of Resentment: Hence it comes to pass that the first Offence, even when so slight as presently to be dropt and forgotten, becomes the Occasion of entering into a long Intercourse of ill Offices: Neither is it at all uncommon to see Persons, in this Progress of Stife and Variance, change Parts; and him, who was at first the injured Person, become more injurious and blameable than the Aggressor. Put the Case then, that the Law of Retaliation was universally received, and allowed, as an innocent Rule of Life, by all ; and the Observance of it thought by many, (and then it would soon come to be thought by all,) a Point of Honour :

SERM. nour: This supposes every Man in private  
IX. Cases to pass Sentence in his own Cause ;  
and likewise, that Anger or Resentment is to  
be the Judge. Thus, from the numberless  
Partialities which we have for ourselves,  
every one would often think himself injured  
when he was not : and in most Cases would  
represent an Injury as much greater than it  
really is ; the imagined Dignity of the Person  
offended would scarce ever fail to magnifie  
the Offence. And, if bare Retaliation, or  
returning just the Mischief received, always  
begets Resentment in the Person upon whom  
we retaliate, what would that Excess do ?  
Add to this, that he likewise has his Partiali-  
ties—There is no going on to represent this  
Scene of Rage and Madness : It is manifest  
there would be no Bounds, nor any End.  
*If the Beginning of Strife is as when one  
letteth out Water, what would it come to  
when allowed this free and unrestrained  
Course? As Coals are to burning Coals, or  
Wood to Fire; so would these contentious  
Men be to kindle Strife.* And, since the In-  
dulgence of Revenge hath manifestly this  
Tendency, and does actually produce these  
Effects in Proportion as it is allowed ; a Passi-  
on of so dangerous a Nature ought not to be  
indulged,

indulged, were there no other Reason against it.

Secondly, It hath been shewn that the Passion of Resentment was placed in Man, upon Supposition of, and as a Prevention or Remedy to Irregularity and Disorder. Now whether it be allowed or not, that the Passion itself and the Gratification of it joined together are painful to the malicious Person ; it must however be so with Respect to the Person towards whom it is exercised, and upon whom the Revenge is taken. Now, if we consider Mankind, according to that fine Allusion of St. Paul, as *one Body, and every one Members one of another* ; it must be allowed that Resentment is, with Respect to Society, a painful Remedy. Thus then the very Notion or Idea of this Passion, as a Remedy or Prevention of Evil, and as in itself a painful Means, plainly shews that it ought never to be made use of, but only in order to produce some greater Good.

It is to be observed, that this Argument is not founded upon an Allusion or Simile ; but that it is drawn from the very Nature of the Passion itself, and the End for which it was given us. We are obliged to make

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SERM. use of Words taken from sensible Things,  
IX. to explain what is the most remote from  
them: And every one sees, from whence  
the Words Prevention and Remedy are taken.  
But if you please, let these Words be dropped:  
The Thing itself, I suppose, may be express'd  
without them.

THAT Mankind is a Community, that  
we all stand in a Relation to each other, that  
there is a publick End and Interest of Society  
which each Particular is obliged to promote,  
is the Sum of Morals. Consider then the Pa-  
ssion of Resentment, as given to this one  
Body, as given to Society. Nothing can be  
more manifest, than that Resentment is to  
be considered as a secondary Passion, placed  
in us upon Supposition, upon Account of,  
and with Regard to Injury; not, to be sure,  
to promote and further it, but to render it,  
and the Inconveniences and Miseries arising  
from it less and fewer than they would be  
without this Passion. It is as manifest, that  
the Indulgence of it is, with regard to So-  
ciety, a painful Means of obtaining these  
Ends. Considered in itself, it is very unde-  
sirable, and what Society must very much  
wish to be without. It is in every Instance  
absolutely

absolutely an Evil in itself, because it implies SERM.  
producing Misery: And consequently must IX.  
never be indulged or gratified for itself,  
by any one who considers Mankind as a  
Community or Family, and himself as a  
Member of it.

LET us now take this in another View. Every natural Appetite, Passion and Affection, may be gratified in particular Instances, without being subservient to the particular chief End, for which these several Principles were respectively implanted in our Nature. And, if neither this End, nor any other moral Obligation be contradicted, such Gratification is innocent. Thus, I suppose, there are Cases in which each of these Principles, this one of Resentment excepted, may innocently be gratified, without being subservient to what is the main End of it: That is, though it does not conduce to, yet it may be gratified without contradicting that End, or any other Obligation. But the Gratification of Resentment, if it be not conducive to the End for which it was given us, must necessarily contradict, not only the general Obligation to Benevolence, but likewise that particular End itself. The End, for which it was gi-

SERM. ven, is to prevent or remedy Injury; *i. e.* IX. the Misery occasioned by Injury; *i. e.* Misery itself: And the Gratification of it consists in producing Misery; *i. e.* in contradicting the End, for which it was implanted in our Nature.

THIS whole Reasoning is built upon the Difference there is between this Passion and all others. No other Principle, or Passion, hath for its End the Misery of our Fellow-creatures. But Malice and Revenge mediates Evil itself; and to do Mischief, to be the Author of Misery, is the very Thing which gratifies the Passion: This is what it directly tends towards, as its proper Design. Other Vices eventually do Mischief: This alone aims at it as an End.

NOTHING can with Reason be urged in Justification of Revenge, from the good Effects which the Indulgence of it were before mentioned \* to have upon the Affairs of the World; because, though it be a remarkable Instance of the Wisdom of Providence to bring Good out of Evil, yet Vice is Vice to him who is guilty of it. “ But suppose these “ good Effects are foreseen:” That is, Suppose

\* Serm. VIII. p. 152.

pose Reason in a particular Case leads a Man **S E R M.** the same Way as Passion? Why then, to be **IX.**  
sure, he should follow his Reason, in this as well as in all other Cases. So that, turn the Matter which Way ever you will, no more can be allowed to this Passion, than that hath been already \*.

As to that Love of our Enemies, which is commanded; this supposes the general Obligation to Benevolence or Good-will towards Mankind: And this being supposed, that Precept is no more than to forgive Injuries; that is, to keep clear of those Abuses before-mentioned: Because that we have the habitual Temper of Benevolence, is taken for granted.

**R E S E N T M E N T** is not inconsistent with Good-will: For we often see both together in very high Degrees; not only in Parents towards their Children, but in Cases of Friendship and Dependance, where there is no natural Relation. These contrary Passions, though they may lessen, do not necessarily destroy each other. We may therefore love our Enemy, and yet have Resentment against him for his injurious Behaviour towards us. But when this Resentment in-

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tirely

\* Serm. VIII. p. 151.

SERM. tirely destroys our natural Benevolence to-  
IX. wards him, it is excessive, and becomes Ma-  
lice or Revenge. The Command, to pre-  
vent its having this Effect, *i. e.* to forgive In-  
juries, is the same as to love our Enemies ;  
because that Love is always supposed; unless  
destroyed by Resentment.

“ *B u t* though Mankind is the natural  
“ Object of Benevolence, yet may it not be  
“ lessened upon Vice, *i. e.* Injury ?” Allowed : But if every Degree of Vice or Injury  
must destroy that Benevolence, then no Man  
is the Object of our Love ; for no Man is  
without Faults.

“ *B u t* if lower Instances of Injury may  
“ lessen our Benevolence, why may not  
“ higher, or the highest, destroy it ?” The  
Answer is obvious. It is not Man’s being a  
social Creature, much less his being a moral  
Agent, from whence *alone* our Obligations  
to Good-will towards him arise. There is  
an Obligation to it prior to either of these, a-  
rising from his being a sensible Creature ;  
that is, capable of Happiness or Misery. Now  
this Obligation cannot be superseded by his  
moral Character. What justifies publick  
Execution is, not that the Guilt or Demerit  
of the Criminal dispenses with the Obliga-  
tion

tion of Good-will, neither would this justify any Severity ; but, that his Life is inconsistent with the Quiet and Happiness of the World : That is, a general and more enlarged Obligation necessarily destroys a particular and more confined one of the same Kind, inconsistent with it. Guilt, or Injury then does not dispense with or supersede the Duty of Love and Good-will.

NEITHER does that peculiar Regard to ourselves, which was before allowed to be natural \* to Mankind, dispense with it: Because that can no Way innocently heighten our Resentment against those who have been injurious to ourselves in particular, any otherwise than as it heightens our Sense of the Injury or Guilt ; and Guilt, though in the highest Degree, does not, as hath been shewn, dispense with or supersede the Duty of Love and Good-will.

IF all this be true, what can a Man say, who will dispute the Reasonableness, or the Possibility, of obeying the divine Precept we are now considering ? Let him speak out, and it must be thus he will speak. " Mankind, *i. e.* a Creature defective and faulty, is the proper Object of Good-

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" will,

\* Serm. VIII. p. 144.

SERM. " will, whatever his Faults are, when they  
IX. " respect others; but not when they re-  
spect me myself." That Men should be  
affected in this Manner, and *act* accordingly,  
is to be accounted for like other Vices; but  
to *assert* that it *ought*, and *must* be thus, is  
Self-partiality possess'd of the very Under-  
standing.

THUS Love to our Enemies, and those  
who have been injurious to us, is so far from  
being a *Rant*, as it has been prophaneley called,  
that it is in Truth the Law of our Nature,  
and what every one must see and own, who is  
not quite blinded with Self-love.

FROM hence it is easy to see, what is the  
Degree in which we are commanded to  
love our Enemies, or those who have been  
injurious to us. It were well if it could  
as easily be reduced to Practice. It cannot be  
imagined, that we are required to love them  
with any peculiar Kind of Affection. But  
suppose the Person injured to have a due na-  
tural Sense of the Injury, and no more; he  
ought to be affected towards the injurious  
Person in the same Way any good Men, un-  
interested in the Case, would be; if they had  
the same just Sense, which we have sup-  
posed the injured Person to have, of the  
Fault:

## *Forgiveness of Injuries.* 169

Fault: After which there will yet remain SERM.  
real Good-will towards the Offender. IX.

Now what is there in all this, which should be thought impracticable? I am sure there is nothing in it unreasonable. It is indeed no more than that we should not indulge a Passion, which, if generally indulged, would propagate itself so as almost to lay waste the World: That we should suppress that partial, that false Self-Love, which is the Weakness of our Nature: That Uneasiness and Misery should not be produced, without any good Purpose to be served by it: And that we should not be affected towards Persons differently from what their Nature and Character require.

BUT since to be convinced that any Temper of Mind, and Course of Behaviour, is our Duty, and the contrary vicious, hath but a distant Influence upon our Temper and Actions; let me add some few Reflections, which may have a more direct Tendency to subdue those Vices in the Heart, to beget in us this right Temper, and lead us to a right Behaviour towards those who have offended us: Which Reflections however shall be such as will further shew the Obligations we are under to it.

No

SERM. No one, I suppose, would choose to  
IX. have an Indignity put upon him, or to be in-  
juriously treated. If then there be any  
Probability of a Misunderstanding in the  
Case, either from our imagining we are in-  
jured when we are not, or representing the  
Injury to ourselves as greater than it really  
is; one would hope an Intimation of this  
Sort might be kindly received, and that Peo-  
ple would be glad to find the Injury not so  
great as they imagined. Therefore, without  
knowing Particulars, I take upon me  
to assure all Persons who think they have  
received Indignities or injurious Treatment,  
that they may depend upon it, as in a Man-  
ner certain, that the Offence is not so great  
as they themselves imagine. We are in  
such a peculiar Situation, with respect to  
Injuries done to ourselves, that we can scarce  
any more see them as they really are, than  
our Eye can see itself. If we could place  
ourselves at a due Distance, *i. e.* be really  
unprejudiced, we should frequently discern  
That to be in reality Inadvertence and Mis-  
take in our Enemy, which we now fancy we  
see to be Malice or Scorn. From this proper  
Point of View, we should likewise in all  
Probability see something of these latter in  
ourselves,

## *Forgiveness of Injuries.* 171

ourselves, and most certainly a great deal of SERM. the former. Thus the Indignity or Injury would almost infinitely lessen, and perhaps at last come out to be nothing at all. Self-love is a Medium of a peculiar Kind : In these Cases it magnifies every thing which is amiss in others, at the same Time that it lessens every Thing amiss in ourselves.

IX.



ANGER also or Hatred may be considered as another false Medium of viewing Things, which always represents Characters and Actions much worse than they really are. Ill-will not only never speaks, but never thinks well, of the Person towards whom it is exercised. Thus in Cases of Offence and Enmity, the whole Character and Behaviour is considered with an Eye to that particular Part which has offended us, and the whole Man appears monstrous, without any thing right or human in him : Whereas the Resentment should surely at least be confined to that particular Part of Behaviour which gave Offence : since the other Parts of a Man's Life and Character stand just the same as they did before.

IN general, there are very few Instances of Enmity carried to any length but Inadvertency, Misunderstanding, some real

SERM. real Mistake of the Case, on one Side how-  
IX. ever, if not on both, has a great Share  
in it.

IF these Things were attended to, these Ill-humours could not be carried to any length amongst good Men, and they would be exceedingly abated amongst all. And one would hope they might be attended to: For all that these Cautions come to, is really no more than desiring, that Things may be considered and judged of as they are in themselves, that we should have an Eye to, and beware of, what would otherwise lead us into Mistakes. So that to make Allowances for Inadvertence, Misunderstanding, for the Partialities of Self-love, and the false Light which Anger sets Things in; I say, to make Allowances for these, is not to be spoken of as an Instance of Humbleness of Mind, or Meekness and Moderation of Temper; but as what common Sense should suggest, to avoid judging wrong of a Matter before us, though Virtue and Morals were out of the Case. And therefore it as much belongs to ill Men, who will indulge the Vice I have been arguing against, as to good Men, who endeavour to subdue it in themselves. In a Word, all these Cautions, concerning Anger and Self-love,

love, are no more than desiring a Man, who SERM.  
was looking through a Glass, which either IX.  
magnified or lessened, to take Notice, that the  
Objects are not in themselves what they ap-  
pear through that Medium.

To all these Things one might add, that Resentment being out of the Case, there is not properly speaking any such Thing as direct Ill-will in one Man towards another: Therefore the first Indignity or Injury, if it be not owing to Inadvertence or Misunderstanding, may however be resolved into other particular Passions or Self-love: Principles quite distinct from Ill-will, and which we ought all to be disposed to excuse in others, from experiencing so much of them in ourselves. A great Man of Antiquity is reported to have said, that, as He never was indulgent to any one Fault in himself, He could not excuse those of others. This Sentence could scarce with Decency come out of the Mouth of any humane Creature. But if we invert the former Part, and put it thus: That He was indulgent to many Faults in himself, as it is to be feared the best of us are, and yet was implacable; how monstrous would such an Assertion appear? And this is the Case in Respect to every humane Creature, in Pro-  
portion

SERM. portion as He is without the forgiving Spirit  
IX. I have been recommending.

~~ FURTHER, Though Injury, Injustice, Oppression, the Baseness of Ingratitude, are the natural Objects of Indignation, or if you please of Resentment, as before explained; yet they are likewise the Objects of Compassion, as they are their own Punishment, and without Repentance will for ever be so. No one ever did a designed Injury to another, but at the same Time He did a much greater to himself. If therefore we would consider Things justly, such an one is, according to the natural Course of our Affections, an Object of Compassion, as well as of Displeasure: And to be affected really in this Manner, I say really, in Opposition to Show and Pretence, argues the true Greatness of Mind. We have an Example of Forgiveness in this Way in its utmost Perfection, and which indeed includes in it all that is Good, in that Prayer of our Blessed Saviour on the Cross: *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*

BUT *Lastly*, The Offences which we are all guilty of against God, and the Injuries which Men do to each other, are often mentioned together: And, making Allowances for

for the infinite Distance between the Majesty SERM.  
of Heaven, and a frail Mortal, and likewise IX.  
for this, that He cannot possibly be affected or  
moved as we are ; Offences committed by  
others against ourselves, and the Manner in  
which we are apt to be affected with them,  
give a real Occasion for calling to Mind our  
own Sins against God. Now there is an Ap-  
prehension and Pre-sentiment, natural to  
Mankind, that we ourselves shall one Time  
or other be dealt with, as we deal with others ;  
and a peculiar Acquiescence in, and Feeling  
of the Equity and Justice of this equal Distri-  
bution. This natural Notion of Equity the  
Son of Sirach has put in the strongest way.

\* *He that revengeth shall find Vengeance from the Lord, and he will surely keep his Sins in Remembrance. Forgive thy Neighbour the Hurt he hath done unto thee, so shall thy Sins also be forgiven when thou prayest. One Man beareth Hatred against another, and doth he seek Pardon from the Lord? He sheweth no Mercy to a Man which is like himself; and doth he ask Forgiveness of his own Sins? Let any one read our Saviour's Parable of the King who took Account of his Servants †; and the Equity and Rightness*

of

\* Eccl. xxviii. 1—4.

† Matth. xviii.

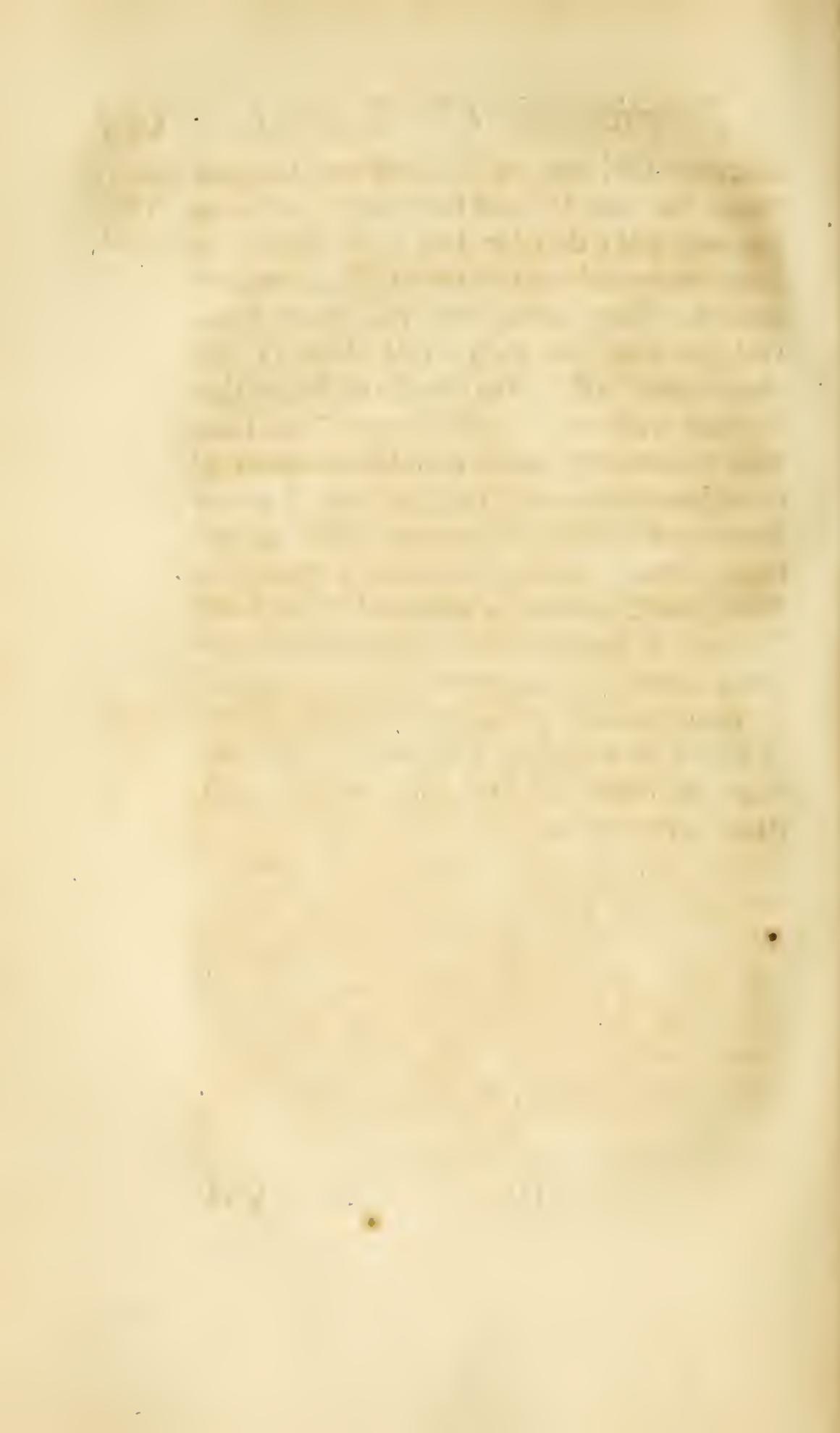
SERM. of the Sentence, which was passed upon  
IX. him who was unmerciful to his Fellow-Ser-  
vant, will be felt. There is somewhat in  
Humane Nature, which accords to, and falls  
in with that Method of Determination. Let  
us then place before our Eyes the Time which  
is represented in the Parable; That of our  
own Death, or the final Judgment. Suppose  
yourselves under the Apprehensions of ap-  
proaching Death; that you were just going  
to appear naked and without Disguise before  
the Judge of all the Earth, to give an Ac-  
count of your Behaviour towards your Fel-  
low-creatures: Could any Thing raise more  
dreadful Apprehensions of that Judgment,  
than the Reflection that you had been impla-  
cable, and without Mercy towards those who  
had offended you: without that forgiving  
Spirit towards others, which that it may now  
be exercised towards yourselves, is your  
only Hope? And these natural Apprehensi-  
ons are authorized by our Saviour's Applica-  
tion of the Parable: *So likewise shall my  
heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from  
your Hearts forgive not every one his Brother  
their Trespasses,* On the other Hand, sup-  
pose a good Man in the same Circumstance,  
in the last Part and Close of Life; conscious  
of

## *Forgiveness of Injuries.* 177

of many Frailities, as the best are, but con- SERM.  
scious too that He had been meek, forgiving IX.  
and merciful; that He had in Simplicity of  
Heart been ready to pass over Offences against  
himself: The having felt this good Spirit  
will give him, not only a full View of the  
Amiableness of it, but the surest Hope that  
He shall meet with it in his Judge. This like-  
wise is confirmed by his own Declaration: *If*  
*ye forgive Men their Trespasses, your heavenly*  
*Father will likewise forgive you.* And that we  
might have a constant Sense of it upon our  
Mind, the Condition is express'd in our daily  
Prayer. A forgiving Spirit is therefore abso-  
lutely necessary, as ever we hope for pardon  
of our own Sins, as ever we hope for Peace  
of Mind in our dying Moments, or for the  
divine Mercy at that Day when we shall most  
stand in need of it.

N

S E R M O N



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# SERMON X.

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## *Upon Self-Deceit.*

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2. SAM. xii. 7.

*And Nathan said to David, Thou art the Man.*

**T**H E S S E Words are the Application of Nathan's Parable to *David*, upon Occasion of his Adultery with *Bathsheba*, and the Murder of *Uriah* her Husband. The Parable, which is related in the most beautiful Simplicity, is this:

\* *There were two Men in one City; the one rich, and the other poor, The rich Man had exceeding many Flocks and Herds: But the poor Man had nothing, save one little Ew-Lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: And it grew up together with him,*

N 2

SERM.  
X.  
~~

and

\* Ver. 1.

SERM. and with his Children ; it did eat of his own  
X. Meat, and drank of his own Cup, and  
lay in his Bosom, and was unto him as a  
Daughter. And there came a Traveller  
unto the rich Man, and he spared to take  
of his own Flock, and of his own Herd, to  
dress for the way-faring Man that was  
come unto him, but took the poor Man's  
Lamb, and dressed it for the Man that was  
come to him. And David's Anger was  
greatly kindled against the Man, and he said  
to Nathan, *As the Lord liveth, the Man*  
*that hath done this Thing shall surely die.*  
*And he shall restore the Lamb four-fold,*  
*because he did this Thing, and because he*  
*had no Pity.* David passes Sentence, not  
only that there should be a four-fold Resti-  
tution made ; but he proceeds to the Ri-  
gour of Justice, *the Man that hath done*  
*this Thing shall die :* And this Judgment is  
pronounced with the utmost Indignation a-  
gainst such an Act of Inhumanity ; *As the*  
*Lord liveth, he shall surely die : and his*  
*Anger was greatly kindled against the Man.*  
And the Prophet answered, *Thou art the*  
*Man.* He had been guilty of much greater  
Inhumanity, with the utmost Deliberation,  
Thought and Contrivance. Near a Year  
must

must have passed, between the Time of the SERM. Commission of his Crimes, and the Time X. of the Prophet's coming to him ; and it does not appear from the Story, that he had in all this While the least Remorse or Contrition.

T H E R E is not any thing, relating to Men and Characters, more surprizing and unaccountable, than this Partiality to themselves, which is observable in many ; as there is nothing of more melancholy Reflection, respecting Morality, Virtue and Religion. Hence it is that many Men seem perfect Strangers to their own Characters. They think, and reason, and judge quite differently upon any Matter relating to themselves, from what they do in Cases of Others where they are not interested. Hence it is one hears People exposing Follies, which they themselves are eminent for ; and talking with great Severity against particular Vices, which, if all the World be not mistaken, they themselves are notoriously guilty of. This Self-ignorance and Self-partiality may be in all different Degrees. It is a lower Degree of it, which *David* himself refers to in these Words, *Who can tell how oft he offendeth? O cleanse thou me from my secret Faults.* This

SERM. is the Ground of that Advice of Elihu to  
X. Job: *Surely it is meet to be said unto God,*  
~~~~ *That which I see not, teach thou me; if*  
*I have done Iniquity, I will do no more.* And  
Solomon saw this Thing in a very strong Light,  
when he said, *He that trusteth his own Heart is*  
*a Fool.* This likewise was the Reason why  
that Precept, *Know thyself,* was so frequently  
inculcated by the Philosophers of old. For  
if it were not for that partial and fond Regard  
to ourselves, it would certainly be no great  
Difficulty to know our own Character, what  
passes within the Bent and Bias of our Mind;  
much less would there be any Difficulty in  
judging rightly of our own Actions. But  
from this Partiality it frequently comes to  
pass, that the Observation of many Men's  
being themselves last of all acquainted with  
what falls out in their own Families, may be  
applied to a nearer Home, to what passes  
within their own Breasts.

T H E R E is plainly, in the Generality of  
Mankind, an Absence of Doubt or Distrust,  
in a very great Measure, as to their moral  
Character and Behaviour; and likewise a  
Disposition to take for granted, that all is  
right and well with them in these Respects.  
The former is owing to their not reflect-  
ing

ing, not exercising their Judgment upon SERM.  
themselves; the latter to Self-love. I am X.  
not speaking of that Extravagance, which is  
sometimes to be met with; Instances of  
Persons declaring in Words at length, that  
they never were in the Wrong, nor had  
ever any Diffidence to the Justness of their  
Conduct, in their whole Lives. No, these  
People are too far gone to have any thing  
said to them. The Thing before us is indeed  
of this Kind, but in a lower Degree, and  
confined to the moral Character; some-  
what of which we almost all of us have,  
without reflecting upon it. Now consider  
how long, and how grossly, a Person of  
the best Understanding might be imposed  
upon by one of whom he had not any Sus-  
picion, and in whom he placed an intire  
Confidence; especially if there were Friend-  
ship and real Kindness in the Case: Surely this  
holds even stronger with respect to that Self  
we are all so fond of. Hence arises in Men  
a Disregard of Reproof and Instruction, Rules  
of Conduct and moral Discipline, which  
occasionally come in their Way: A Disre-  
gard, I say, of these; not in every Respect,  
but in this single one, namely, as what may  
be of Service to them in particular towards

SERM. mending their own Hearts and Tempers, and  
X. making them better Men. It never in Ear-  
nest comes into their Thoughts, whether  
such Admonitions may not relate, and be of  
Service to themselves ; and this quite distinct  
from a positive Persuasion to the Contrary,  
a Persuasion from Reflection that they are  
innocent and blameless in those Respects.  
Thus we may invert the Observation which  
is somewhere made upon *Brutus*, that he  
never read but in order to make himself a  
better Man. It scarce comes into the  
Thoughts of the Generality of Mankind,  
that this Use is to be made of moral Reflec-  
tions which they meet with ; that this Use, I  
say, is to be made of them by Themselves, for  
every Body observes and wonders that it is not  
done by Others.

FURTHER, there are Instances of Per-  
sons having so fixed and steady an Eye upon  
their own Interest, whatever they place it in,  
and the Interest of those whom they consider  
as themselves, as in a Manner to regard no-  
thing else ; their Views are almost confined to  
this alone. Now we cannot be acquainted  
with, or in any Propriety of Speech be said to  
know any thing, but what we attend to.  
If therefore they attend only to one Side,  
they

they really will not, cannot see or know what SERM. is to be alledged on the other. Though a Man hath the best Eyes in the World, he cannot see any Way but that which he turns them. Thus these Persons, without passing over the least, the most minute Thing which can possibly be urged in Favour of themselves, shall overlook intirely the plainest and most obvious Things on the other Side. And whilst they are under the Power of this Temper, Thought and Consideration, upon the Matter before them, has scarce any Tendency to set them right: Because they are engaged; and their Deliberation concerning an Action to be done, or Reflection upon it afterwards, is not to see whether it be right, but to find out Reasons to justify or palliate it; palliate it, not to others, but to themselves.

IN some there is observed a general Ignorance of themselves, and wrong Way of thinking and judging in every Thing relating to themselves; their Fortune, Reputation, every Thing in which Self can come in: And this perhaps attended with the rightest Judgment in all other Matters. In others this Partiality is not so general, has not taken hold of the whole Man, but is confined

to

SERM. to some particular favourite Passion, Interest  
X. or Pursuit ; suppose Ambition, Covetousness,  
or any other. And these Persons may pro-  
bably judge and determine what is perfectly  
just and proper, even in Things in which  
they themselves are concerned, if these Things  
have no Relation to their particular favourite  
Passion or Pursuit. Hence arises that ama-  
zing Incongruity; and seeming Inconsis-  
tency of Character, from whence slight  
Observers take it for granted, that the Whole  
is hypocritical and false ; not being able other-  
wise to reconcile the several Parts: Whereas  
in Truth there is real Honesty, so far  
as it goes. There is such a Thing as Men's  
being honest to such a Degree, and in such  
Respects, but no further. And this, as it  
is true, so it is absolutely necessary to be  
taken Notice of, and allowed them ; such  
general and undistinguishing Censure of their  
whole Characters, as designing and false, be-  
ing one main Thing which confirms them in  
their Self-deceit. They know that the whole  
Censure is not true ; and so take for granted  
that no Part of it is.

BUT to go on with the Explanation of  
the Thing itself: Vice in general consists in  
having an unreasonable and too great Re-  
gard

gard to ourselves, in Comparison of others. SERM. Robbery and Murder is never from the Love of Injustice and Cruelty, but to gratify some other Passion, to gain some supposed Advantage: And it is false Selfishness alone, whether cool or passionate, which makes a Man resolutely pursue that End, be it ever so much in the Injury of another. But whereas, in common and ordinary Wickedness, this unreasonableness, this Partiality and Selfishness relates only, or chiefly, to the Temper and Passions, in the Characters we are now considering, it reaches to the Understanding, and influences the very Judgment \*. And, besides that general Want of

X.  
~~~~~

### Distrust

\* That peculiar Regard for ourselves which frequently produces this Partiality of Judgment in our own Favour, may have a quite contrary Effect, and occasions the utmost Diffidence and Distrust of Ourselves; were it only, as it may set us upon a more frequent and strict Survey and Review of our own Character and Behaviour. This Search or Recollection itself implies somewhat of Diffidence; and the Discoveries we make, what is brought to our View, may possibly increase it. Good-will to another may either blind our Judgment, so as to make us overlook his Faults; or it may put us upon exercising that Judgment with greater Strictness, to see whether he is so faultless and perfect as we wish him. If that peculiar Regard to Ourselves leads us to examine our own Character with this greater Severity, in order really to improve and grow better, it is the most commendable Turn of Mind possible, and can scarce be to Excess. But if, as every Thing hath its Counterfeit, we are so much employed about ourselves

SERM. Distrust and Diffidence concerning our own  
X. Character, there are, you see, two Things,  
which may thus prejudice and darken the  
Understanding itself: That Over-fondness  
for ourselves, which we are all so liable to; and  
also being under the Power of any par-  
ticular Passion or Appetite, or engaged in any  
particular Pursuit. And these, especially the  
last of the two, may be in so great a Degree,  
as to influence our Judgment, even of other  
Persons and their Behaviour. Thus a Man,  
whose Temper is formed to Ambition or Co-  
vetousness, shall even approve of them some-  
times in others.

THIS seems to be in a good Measure the  
Account of Self-partiality and Self-deceit,  
when traced up to its Original. Whether it  
be, or be not thought satisfactory, That  
there is such a Thing, is manifest; and that  
it is the Occasion of great Part of the unre-  
asonable Behaviour of Men towards each  
other: That by means of it they palliate their  
Vices and Follies to themselves: and that it  
prevents

ourselves in order to disguise what is amiss, and to make a  
better Appearance; or if our Attention to ourselves has chiefly  
this Effect; it is liable to run up into the greatest Weakness  
and Excess, and is like all other Excesses its own Disappoint-  
ment: For scarce any show themselves to Advantage, who  
are over solicitous of doing so.

prevents their applying to themselves those SERM.  
Reproofs and Instructions, which they meet X.  
with either in Scripture or in moral and re-  
ligious Discourses, though exactly suitable to  
the State of their own Mind, and the Course  
of their Behaviour. There is one Thing  
further to be added here, that the Temper we  
distinguish by Hardness of Heart with respect  
to others, joined with this Self-partiality,  
will carry a Man almost any Lengths of  
Wickedness, in the Way of Oppression hard  
Usage of others, and even to plain Injustice;  
without his having, from what appears, any  
real Sense at all of it. This indeed was not  
the general Character of *David*: For he  
plainly gave Scope to the Affections of Com-  
passion and Good-will, as well as to his Pas-  
sions of another Kind.

BUT as some Occasions and Circumstan-  
ces lie more open to this Self-deceit, and  
give it greater Scope and Opportunities than  
others, these require to be particularly men-  
tioned.

IT is to be observed then, that as there  
are express determinate Acts of Wickedness,  
such as Murder, Adultery, Theft: So on the  
other Hand, there are numberless Cases in  
which the Vice and Wickedness cannot be  
exactly

SERM. exactly defined ; but consists in a certain  
X. general Temper and Course of Action, or in  
the Neglect of some Duty, suppose Charity  
or any other, whose Bounds and Degrees are  
not fixed. This is the very Province of Self-  
deceit and Self-partiality : Here it governs  
without Check or Controul. “ For what  
“ Commandment is there broken ? Is there  
“ a Transgression where there is no Law ?  
“ a Vice which cannot be defined ?

WHOEVER will consider the whole  
Commerce of Humane Life, will see that a  
great Part, perhaps the greatest Part, of the  
Intercourse amongst Mankind, cannot be re-  
duced to fixed determinate Rules. Yet in  
these Cases there is a Right and a Wrong :  
A merciful, a liberal, a kind and compas-  
sionate Behaviour, which surely is our Duty ;  
and an unmerciful contracted Spirit, an hard  
and oppressive Course of Behaviour, which  
is most certainly immoral and vicious. But  
who can define precisely, wherein that  
contracted Spirit and hard Usage of others con-  
sist, as Murder and Theft may be defined ?  
There is not a Word in our Language, which  
expresses more detestable Wickedness than  
*Oppression* : Yet the Nature of this Vice  
cannot be so exactly stated, nor the Bounds  
of

of it so determinately marked, as that we SERM. shall be able to say in all Instances, where X. rigid Right and Justness ends, and Oppres-   
sion begins. In these Cases there is great Latitude left, for every one to determine for, and consequently to deceive himself. It is chiefly in these Cases, that Self-deceit comes in ; as every one must see that there is much larger Scope for it here, than in express, single, determinate Acts of Wickedness. However it comes in with respect to the *Circumstances* attending the most gross and determinate Acts of Wickedness. Of this, the Story of *David*, now before us, affords the most astonishing Instance. It is really prodigious, to see a Man, before so remarkable for Virtue and Piety, going on deliberately from Adultery to Murder, with the same cool Contrivance, and, from what appears, with as little Disturbance, as a Man would endeavour to prevent the ill Consequences of a Mistake he had made in any common Matter. That total Insensibility of Mind with respect to those horrid Crimes, after the Commission of them, manifestly shews that he did some Way or other delude himself : And this could not be with respect to the Crimes themselves, they were so manifestly

SER.M. festly of the grossest Kind. What the particular Circumstances were, with which he extenuated them, and quieted and deceived himself, is not related.

HAVING thus explained the Nature of internal Hypocrisy and Self-deceit, and remarked the Occasions upon which it exerts itself; there are several Things further to be observed concerning it: That all of the Sources, to which it was traced up, are sometimes observable together in one and the same Person: But that one of them is more remarkable, and to a higher Degree, in some, and others of them are so in others: That in general it is a complicated Thing; and may be in all different Degrees and Kinds: That the Temper itself is essentially in its own Nature vicious and immoral. It is Unfairness; it is Dishonesty; it is Falseness of Heart: And is therefore so far from extenuating Guilt, that it is itself the greatest of all Guilt in Proportion to the Degree it prevails; for it is a Corruption of the whole moral Character in its Principle. Our Understanding, and Sense of Good and Evil, is the Light and Guide of Life: *If therefore this Light that is in thee be Darkness, how great*

great is that Darkness? \* For this Reason SERM. our Saviour puts an *evil Eye* as the direct X. opposite to a *single Eye*; the Absence of ~~the~~ that Simplicity, which these last Words imply, being itself evil and vicious. And whilst Men are under the Power of this Temper, in Proportion still to the Degree they are so, they are fortified on every Side against Conviction: And when they hear the Vice and Folly of what is in Truth their own Course of Life, exposed in the justest and strongest Manner, they will often assent to it, and even carry the Matter further; persuading themselves, one does not know how, but some Way or other persuading themselves, that they are out of the Case, and that it hath no Relation to them. Yet, notwithstanding this, there *frequently appears* a Suspicion, that all is not right, or as it should be; and perhaps there *is always* at Bottom somewhat of this Sort. There are doubtless many Instances of the Ambitious, the Revengeful, the Covetous, and those whom with too great Indulgence we only call the Men of Pleasure, who will not allow themselves to think how guilty they are, who explain and

O argue

SERM. argue away their Guilt to Themselves: And X. though they do really impose upon Themselves in some Measure, yet there are none of them but have, if not a proper Knowledge, yet at least, an implicit Suspicion, where the Weakness lies, and what Part of their Behaviour they have Reason to wish unknown or forgotten for ever. Truth, and real good Sense, and thorough Integrity, carry along with them a peculiar Consciousness of their own Genuineness: There is a Feeling belonging to them, which does not accompany their Counterfeits, Error, Folly, Half-Honesty, partial and slight Regards to Virtue and Right, so far only as they are consistent with that Course of Gratification which Men happen to be set upon. And, if this be the Case, it is much the same as if we should suppose a Man to have had a general View of some Scene, enough to satisfy him that it was very disagreeable, and then to shut his Eyes, that he might not have a particular or distinct View of its several Deformities. It is as easy to close the Eyes of the Mind, as those of the Body: And the former is more frequently done with Wilfulness, and yet not attended to, than the latter; the Actions of the Mind being more quick

quick and transient, than those of the Senses. SERM.

This may be further illustrated by another X.

Thing observable in ordinary Life. 

It is not uncommon for Persons, who run out their Fortunes, intirely to neglect looking into the State of their Affairs, and this from a general Knowledge, that the Condition of them is bad. These extravagant People are perpetually ruined before they themselves expected it: And they tell you for an Excuse, and tell you truly, that they did not, think they were so much in Debt, or that their Expences so far exceeded their Income. And yet no one will take this for an Excuse, who is sensible that their Ignorance of their particular Circumstances was owing to their general Knowledge of them; that is, their general Knowledge, that Matters were not well with them, prevented their looking into Particulars. There is somewhat of the like Kind with this in Respect to Morals, Virtue, and Religion. Men find that the Survey of themselves, their own Heart and Temper, their own Life and Behaviour, doth not afford them Satisfaction: Things are not as they should be: Therefore they turn away, will not go over Particulars, or look deeper, lest they should find more

S E R M. amiss. For who would choose to be put out  
X. of Humour with himself? No one surely, if  
it were not in order to mend, and to be more  
thoroughly and better pleased with himself  
for the future.

I F this sincere Self-Enjoyment and Home-Satisfaction be thought desirable, and worth some Pains and Diligence; the following Reflections will, I suppose, deserve your Attention; as what may be of Service and Assistance to all who are in any Measure honestly disposed, for avoiding that fatal Self-deceit, and towards getting acquainted with themselves.

T H E *first* is, that those who have never had any Suspicion of, who have never made Allowances for this Weakness in themselves, who have never (if I may be allowed such a manner of speaking) caught themselves in it, may almost take for granted that they have been very much misled by it. For consider: Nothing is more manifest, than that Affection and Passion of all Kinds influence the Judgment. Now as we have naturally a greater Regard to ourselves than to others, as the private Affection is more prevalent than the publick; the former will have proportionally a greater Influence upon



on the Judgment, upon our Way of considering Things. People are not backward in owning this Partiality of Judgment, in Cases of Friendship and natural Relation. The Reason is obvious, why is it not so readily acknowledged, when the Interest which misleads us is more confined, confined to ourselves: But we all take Notice of it in each other in these Cases. There is not any Observation more common, than that there is no judging of a Matter from hearing only one Side. This is not founded upon Supposition, at least it is not always, of a formed Design in the Relater to deceive: For it holds in Cases, where he expects that the Whole will be told over again by the other Side. But the Supposition, which this Observation is founded upon, is the very Thing now before us; namely, that Men are exceedingly prone to deceive themselves, and judge too favourably in every Respect, where Themselves, and their own Interest are concerned. Thus, though we have not the least Reason to suspect that such an interested Person hath any Intention to deceive us, yet we of Course make great Allowances for his having deceived himself. If this be general, almost universal, it is prodigious that every

SERM. Man can think himself an Exception, and X. that he is free from this Self-partiality. The ~~~~~~~ direct contrary is the Truth. Every Man may take for granted that he has a great deal of it, till, from the strictest Observation upon himself, he finds particular Reason to think otherwise.

*Secondly*, There is one easy and almost sure Way to avoid being misled by this Self-partiality, and to get acquainted with our real Character: To have Regard to the suspicious Part of it, and keep a steady Eye over ourselves in that Respect. Suppose then a Man fully satisfied with himself, and his own Behaviour; such an one, if you please, as the Pharisee in the Gospel, or a better Man—Well, but allowing this good Opinion you have of yourself to be true, yet every one is liable to be misrepresented. Suppose then an Enemy were to set about defaming you, what Part of your Character would he single out? What particular Scandal, think you, would he be most likely to fix upon you? And what would the World be most ready to believe? There is scarce a Man living but could, from the most transient superficial View of himself, answer this Question. What is that ill Thing, that faulty Behaviour,

Behaviour, which I am apprehensive an Enemy, who was thoroughly acquainted with me, would be most likely to lay to my Charge, and which the World would be most apt to believe? It is indeed possible that a Man may not be guilty in that Respect. All that I say is, let him in Plainness and Honesty fix upon that Part of his Character for a particular Survey and Reflection; and by this he will come to be acquainted, whether he be guilty or innocent in that Respect, and how far he is one or the other.

*Thirdly*, It would very much prevent our being misled by this Self-partiality, to reduce that practical Rule of our Saviour, *Whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, even so do unto them*, to our Judgment, and Way of thinking. This Rule, you see, consists of two Parts. One is, to substitute another for yourself, when you take a Survey of any Part of your Behaviour, or consider what is proper and fit and reasonable for you to do upon any Occasion: The other Part is, that you substitute yourself in the room of another; consider yourself as the Person affected by such a Behaviour, or towards whom such an Action is done: And then you would not only see, but like-

SERM. wise feel, the Reasonableness or Unreasonableness of such an Action or Behaviour.

But alas, the Rule itself may be dishonestly applied: There are Persons who have not Impartiality enough with respect to themselves, nor Regard enough for others, to be able to make a just Application of it. This just Application, if Men would honestly make it, is in Effect, all that I have been recommending; it is the whole Thing, the direct contrary to that inward Dishonesty as respecting our Intercourse with our Fellow-creatures. And even the Bearing this Rule in their Thoughts, may be of some Service; the Attempt thus to apply it, is an Attempt towards being fair and impartial, and may chance unawares to shew them to themselves, to shew them the Truth of the Case they are considering.

UPON the whole it is manifest, that there is such a Thing as this Self-partiality and Self-deceit: That in some Persons it is to a Degree which would be thought incredible, were not the Instances before our Eyes; of which the Behaviour of *Davia* is perhaps the highest one possible, in a single particular Case; for there is not the least Appearance, that it reached his general

ral Character: That we are almost all of us SERM.  
influenced by it in some Degree, and in X.  
some Respects: That therefore every one  
ought to have an Eye to and beware of it.  
And all that I have further to add upon this  
Subject is, that either there is a Difference be-  
tween Right and Wrong, or there is not: Religion is true, or it is not. If it be not, there is no Reason for any Concern about it: But if it be true, it requires real Fairness of Mind and Honesty of Heart. And, if People will be wicked, they had better of the two be so from the common vicious Passions without such Refinements, than from this deep and calm Source of Delusion; which undermines the whole Principle of Good; darkens that Light, that *Candle of the Lord within*, which is to direct our Steps; and corrupts Conscience, which is the Guide of Life.



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## SERMON XI.

*Upon the Love of our Neighbour.*

Preached on *Advent Sunday.*

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R O M. xiii. 9.

*And if there be any other Commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this Saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.*

**I**T is commonly observed, that there is a Disposition in Men to complain of the Viciousness and Corruption of the Age in which they live, as greater than that of former ones ; which is usually followed with this further Observation, that Mankind has been in that respect much the same in all Times. Now not to determine whether this last be not contradicted by the Accounts of

SER.M.  
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SER. of History ; thus much can scarce be doubted, that Vice and Folly takes different Turns, and some particular Kinds of it are more open and avowed in some Ages than in others : And, I suppose, it may be spoken of as very much the Distinction of the present to profess a contracted Spirit, and greater Regards to Self-interest, than appears to have been done formerly. Upon this Account it seems worth while to inquire, whether private Interest is likely to be promoted in Proportion to the Degree in which Self-love engrosses us, and prevails over all other Principles ; or whether the contracted Affection may not possibly be so prevalent as to disappoint itself, and even contradict its own End, private Good.

AND since further, there is generally thought to be some peculiar Kind of Contrariety between Self-love and the Love of our Neighbour, between the Pursuit of publick and of private Good ; insomuch that when you are recommending one of these, you are supposed to be speaking against the other ; and from hence arises a secret Prejudice against, and frequently open Scorn of all Talk of publick Spirit, and real Good-will to our Fellow-creatures ; it will

will be necessary to inquire what Respect SERM. Benevolence hath to Self-love, and the Pur- XI.   
suit of private Interest, to the Pursuit of pub-   
llick: Or whether there be any Thing of that   
peculiar Inconsistence and Contrariety between   
them, over and above what there is between   
Self-love and other Passions and particular   
Affections, and their respective Pursuits.

THESE Inquiries, it is hoped, may be fa-  
vourably attended to: For there shall be all  
possible Concessions made to the favourite  
Passion, which hath so much allowed to it,  
and whose Cause is so universally pleaded:  
It shall be treated with the utmost Tenderness  
and Concern for its Interests.

IN order to this, as well as to determine  
the forementioned Questions; it will be ne-  
cessary to consider the Nature, the Object and  
End of that Self-love, as distinguished from other  
Principles or Affections in the Mind, and their  
respective Objects.

EVERY Man hath a general Desire of his  
own Happiness; and likewise a Variety of  
particular Affections, Passions and Appetites  
to particular external Objects. The former  
proceeds from, or is Self-love; and seems in-  
seperable from all sensible Creatures, who  
can reflect upon themselves and their own  
Interest

SER.M. Interest or Happiness, so as to have that Interest an Object to their Minds : What is to be said of the latter is, that they proceed from, or together make up that particular Nature, according to which Man is made. The Object the former pursues, is somewhat internal, our own Happiness, Enjoyment, Satisfaction ; whether we have, or have not, a distinct particular Perception what it is, or wherein it consists : The Objects of the latter are this or that particular external Thing, which the Affections tend towards, and of which it hath always a particular Idea or Perception. The Principle we call Self-love never seeks any Thing external for the sake of the Thing, but only as a Means of Happiness or Good : Particular Affections rest in the external Things themselves. One belongs to Man as a reasonable Creature reflecting upon his own Interest or Happiness. The other, though quite distinct from Reason, are as much a Part of Humane Nature.

THAT all particular Appetites and Passions are towards *external Things themselves*, distinct from the *Pleasure arising from them*, is manifested from hence ; that there could not be this Pleasure, were it not for that prior

prior Suitableness between the Object and the Passion : There could be no Enjoyment or Delight from one Thing more than another, from eating Food more than from swallowing a Stone, if there were not an Affection or Appetite to one Thing more than another.

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E V E R Y particular Affection, even the Love of our Neighbour, is as really our own Affection, as Self-love ; and the Pleasure arising from its Gratification is as much my own Pleasure, as the Pleasure Self-love would have, from knowing I myself should be happy some time hence, would be my own Pleasure. And if, because every particular Affection is a Man's own, and the Pleasure arising from its Gratification his own Pleasure, or Pleasure to himself, such particular Affection must be called Self-love ; according to this Way of speaking, no Creature whatever can possibly act but merely from Self-love ; and every Action and every Affection whatever is to be resolved up into this one Principle. But then this is not the Language of Mankind : Or if it were, we should want Words to express the Difference, between the Principle of an Action, proceeding from cool Consideration that it will be

SERMON. be to my own Advantage; and an Action, XI. suppose of Revenge, or of Friendship, by which a Man runs upon certain Ruin, to do Evil or Good to another. It is manifest the Principles of these Actions are totally different, and so want different Words to be distinguished by: All that they agree in is, that they both proceed from, and are done to gratify an Inclination in a Man's Self. But the Principle or Inclination in one Case is Self-love; in the other, Hatred or Love of another. There is then a Distinction between the cool Principle of Self-love, or general Desire of our own Happiness, as one Part of our Nature, and one Principle of Action; and the particular Affections towards particular external Objects, as another Part of our Nature, and another Principle of Action. How much soever therefore is to be allowed for Self-love, yet it cannot be allowed to be the Whole of our inward Constitution; because, you see, there are other Parts or Principles which come into it.

FURTHER, private Happiness or Good is all which Self-love can make us desire, or be concerned about: In having this consists its Gratification: It is an Affection to ourselves; a Regard to our own Interest, Happiness

pines and private Good : And in the Pro- SERM.  
portion a Man hath this, he is interested, or XI.  
a Lover of himself. Let this be kept in  
Mind ; because there is commonly, as I  
shall presently have Occasion to observe, a-  
nother Sense put upon these Words. On  
the other Hand, particular Affections tend  
towards particular external Things : These  
are their Objects : Having these is their End :  
In this consists their Gratification : No Mat-  
ter whether it be, or be not, upon the  
Whole, our Interest or Happiness. An  
Action done from the former of these Prin-  
ciples is called an interested Action. An  
Action proceeding from any of the latter  
has its Denomination of passionate, ambi-  
tious, friendly, revengeful, or any other, from  
the particular Appetite or Affection from  
which it proceeds. Thus Self-love as one  
Part of Humane Nature, and the several par-  
ticular Principles as the other Part, are,  
Themselves, their Objects and Ends, stated  
and shewn.

FROM hence it will be easy to see, how  
far, and in what Ways, each of these can con-  
tribute and be subservient to the private Good  
of the Individual. Happiness does not con-  
sist in Self-love. The Desire of Happiness is

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SERM. no more the Thing itself, than the Desire of  
XI. Riches is the Possession or Enjoyment of  
them. People may love themselves with  
the most entire and unbounded Affection,  
and yet be extreamly miserable. Neither  
can Self-love any way help them out, but  
by setting them on Work to get rid of the  
Causes of their Misery, to gain or make use  
of those Objects which are by Nature a-  
dapted to afford Satisfaction. Happiness or  
Satisfaction consists only in the Enjoyment  
of those Objects, which are by Nature suited  
to our several particular Appetites, Passi-  
ons and Affections. So that if Self-love  
wholly engrosses us, and leaves no room for  
any other Principle, there can be abso-  
lutely no such Thing at all as Happiness, or  
Enjoyment of any Kind whatever; since  
Happiness consists in the Gratification of par-  
ticular Passions, which supposes the having  
of them. Self-love then does not consti-  
tute *This* or *That* to be our Interest or  
Good; but, our Interest or Good being con-  
stituted by Nature and supposed, Self-love  
only puts us upon obtaining and securing it.  
Therefore, if it be possible, that Self-love  
may prevail and exert itself in a Degree  
or Manner, which is not subservient to  
this.

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this End; then it will not follow, that SERM. our Interest will be promoted in Proportion to the Degree in which that Principle engrosses us, and prevails over others. Nay further, the private and contracted Affection, when it is not subservient to this End private Good, may, for any thing that appears, have a direct contrary Tendency and Effect. And if we will consider the Matter, we shall see that it often really has. *Disengagement* is absolutely necessary to enjoyment: And a Person may have so steady and fixed an Eye upon his own Interest, whatever he places it in, as may hinder him from attending to many Gratifications within his Reach, which others have their Minds *free* and *open* to. Over-fondness for a Child is not generally thought to be for its Advantage: And, if there be any Guess to be made from Appearances, surely that Character we call Selfish is not the most promising for Happiness. Such a Temper may plainly be, and exert itself in a Degree and Manner which may give unnecessary and useless Sollicitude and Anxiety, in a Degree and Manner which may prevent obtaining the Means and Materials of Enjoyment, as well as the making Use of them. Immoderate Self-love does very

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SERMON ill consult its own Interest: And, how much soever a Paradox it may appear, it is certainly true, that even from Self-love we should endeavour to get over all inordinate Regard to, and Consideration of ourselves. Every one of our Passions and Affections hath its natural Stint and Bound, which may easily be exceeded; whereas our Enjoyments can possibly be but in a determinate Measure and Degree. Therefore such Excess of the Affection, since it cannot procure any Enjoyment, must in all Cases be useless; but is generally attended with Inconveniences, and often is downright Pain and Misery. This holds as much with Regard to Self-love as to all other Affections. The natural Degree of it, so far as it sets us on work to gain and make use of the Materials of Satisfaction, may be to our real Advantage; but beyond or besides this, it is in several Respects an Inconvenience and Disadvantage. Thus it appears, that private Interest is so far from being likely to be promoted in Proportion to the Degree in which Self-love engrosses us, and prevails over all other Principles; that *the contracted Affection may be so prevalent as to disappoint itself, and*

and even contradict its own End, private SERM.  
Good.

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“ But who, except the most sordidly  
“ Covetous, ever thought there was any  
“ Rivalship between the Love of Greatness,  
“ Honour, Power, or between sensual Ap-  
“ petites, and Self-love ? No, there is a per-  
“ fect Harmony between them. It is by  
“ Means of these particular Appetites and  
“ Affections that Self-love is gratified in En-  
“ joyment, Happiness and Satisfaction. The  
“ Competition and Rivalship is between Self-  
“ love, and the Love of our Neighbour :  
“ That Affection which leads us out of our-  
“ selves, makes us regardless of our own  
“ Interest, and substitute that of another in  
“ its stead.” Whether then there be any  
peculiar Competition and Contrariety in this  
Case, shall now be considered.

SELF-LOVE and Interestedness was stated to consist in or be an Affection to ourselves, a Regard to our own private Good ; It is therefore distinct from Benevolence, which is an Affection to the Good of our Fellow-creatures. But that Benevolence is distinct from, that is, not the same Thing with Self-love, is no Reason for its being looked upon with any peculiar Suspicion ; because

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SERM. every Principle whatever, by means of which  
XI. Self-love is gratified, is distinct from it: And  
all Things which are distinct from each other,  
are equally so. A Man has an Affection or  
Aversion to another: That one of these  
tends to, and is gratified by doing Good,  
that the other tends to, and is gratified by  
doing Harm, does not in the least alter the  
Respect which either one or the other of these  
inward Feelings has to Self-love. We use  
the Word *Property* so as to exclude any  
other Persons having an Interest in that of  
which we say a particular Man has the  
Property. And we often use the Word  
*Selfish* so as to exclude in the same Manner  
all Regards to the Good of others. But the  
Cases are not parallel: For though That  
Exclusion is really Part of the Idea of Pro-  
perty; yet such positive Exclusion, or bring-  
ing this peculiar Disregard to the Good of  
Others into the Idea, or Self-love, is in rea-  
lity adding to the Idea of changing it from  
what it was before stated to consist in, name-  
ly, in an Affection to Ourselves \*. This  
being the whole Idea of Self-love, it can no  
otherwise exclude Good-will or Love of O-  
thers, than merely by not including it, no  
otherwise,

\* p. 208.

otherwise, than it excludes Love of Arts or Reputation, or of any Thing else. Neither on the other Hand does Benevolence, any more than Love of Arts or of Reputation, exclude Self-love. Love of our Neighbour then has just the same Respect to, is no more distant from Self-love, than Hatred of our Neighbour, or than Love or Hatred of any Thing else. Thus the Principles, from which Men rush upon certain Ruin for the Destruction of an Enemy, and for the Preservation of a Friend, have the same Respect to the private Affection, and are equally interested, or equally disinterested: And it is of no Avail, whether they are said to be one or the other. Therefore to those who are shocked to hear Virtue spoken of as disinterested, it may be allowed that it is indeed absurd to speak thus of it; unless Hatred, several particular Instances of Vice, and all the common Affections and Aversions in Mankind, are acknowledged to be disinterested too. Is there any less Inconsistence, between the Love of inanimate Things, or of Creatures meerly sensitive, and Self-love; than between Self-love, and the Love of our Neighbour? Is Desire of and Delight in the Happiness of another any more a Diminution of

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SERM. Self-love, than desire of and Delight in the  
XI. Esteem of another? They are both equally  
Desire of and Delight in somewhat external  
to ourselves: Either both or neither are so.  
The Object of Self-love is expressed in the  
Term Self: And every Appetite of Sense,  
and every particular Affection of the Heart,  
are equally interested or disinterested, be-  
cause the Objects of them all are equally  
Self or somewhat else. Whatever Ridicule  
therefore the Mention of a disinterested  
Principle or Action may be supposed to lie  
open to, must, upon the Matter being thus  
stated, relate to Ambition, and every Ap-  
petite and particular Affection, as much as  
to Benevolence. And indeed all the Ridi-  
cule, and all the grave Perplexity, of which  
this Subject hath had its full Share, is merely  
from Words. The most intelligible Way of  
speaking of it seems to be this: That Self-  
love, and the Actions done in Consequence  
of it (for these will presently appear to be  
the same as to this Question) are interested;  
that particular Affections towards external  
Objects, and the Actions done in conse-  
quence of those Affections, are not so. But  
every one is at Liberty to use Words as he  
pleases. All that is here insisted upon is,  
that

that Ambition, Revenge, Benevolence, all S.E.R.M. particular Passions whatever, and the Actions they produce, are equally interested or disinterested. X.I  
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Thus it appears that there is no peculiar Contrariety between Self-love and Benevolence; no greater Competition between these, than between any other particular Affections and Self-love. This relates to the Affections themselves. Let us now see whether there be any peculiar Contrariety between the respective Courses of Life which these Affections lead to; whether there be any greater Competition between the Pursuit of private and of publick Good, than between any other particular Pursuits and that of private Good.

HERE seems no other Reason to suspect that there is any such peculiar Contrariety, but only that the Courses of Action which Benevolence leads to, has a more direct Tendency to promote the Good of Others, than that Course of Action which Love of Reputation suppose, or any other particular Affection leads to. But that any Affection tends to the Happiness of Another, does not hinder its tending to one's own Happiness too. That Others enjoy the Benefit

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SERM. nefit of the Air and the Light of the Sun,  
XI: does not hinder, but that these are as much  
one's own private Advantage now, as they  
would be if we had the Property of them  
exclusive of all Others. So a Pursuit which  
tends to promote the Good of another, yet  
may have as great Tendency to promote pri-  
vate Interest, as a Pursuit which does not  
tend to the Good of Another at all, or which  
is Mischievous to him. All particular Af-  
fections whatever, Resentment, Benevo-  
lence, Love of Arts, equally lead to a  
Course of Action for their own Gratifi-  
cation, *i. e.* the Gratification of Our-  
selves; and the Gratification of each gives  
Delight: So far then 'tis manifest they  
have all the same Respect to private Inter-  
est. Now take into Consideration further,  
concerning these three Pursuits, that the  
End of the first is the Harm, of the second,  
the Good of Another, of the last, somewhat  
indifferent; and is there any Necessity, that  
these additional Considerations should alter  
the Respect, which we before saw these  
three Pursuits had to private Interest; or  
render any one of them less conducive to it,  
than any other? Thus One Man's Affecti-  
on is to Honour as his End; in order to ob-  
tain

tain which he thinks no Pains too great. SERM. Suppose another, with such a Singularity of Mind, as to haye the same Affection to publick Good as his End, which he endeavours with the same Labour to obtain. In Case of Success, surely the Man of Benevolence hath as great Enjoyment as the Man of Ambition; they both equally having the End, their Affections, in the same Degree tended to: But in Case of Disappointment, the benevolent Man has clearly the Advantage; since endeavouring to do Good considered as a Virtuous Pursuit, is gratified by its own Consciousnes, *i. e.* is in a Degree its own Reward.

AND as to these two, or Benevolence and any other particular Passions whatever, considered in a further View, as forming a general Temper, which more or less disposes us for Enjoyment of all the common Blessings of Life, distinct from their own Gratification: Is Benevolence less the Temper of Tranquillity and Freedom than Ambition or Covetousness? Does the benevolent Man appear less easy with himself, from his Love to his Neighbour? Does he less relish his Being? Is there any peculiar Gloom seated on his Face? Is his Mind less open to Entertainment,

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SERMON. tainment, to any particular Gratification?

XI. Nothing is more manifest, than that being in  
Good-humour, which is Benevolence whilst  
it lasts, is itself the Temper of Satisfaction and  
Enjoyment.

SUPPOSE then a Man sitting down to consider how he might become most easy to himself, and attain the greatest Pleasure he could; all that which is his real natural Happiness. This can only consist in the Enjoyment of those Objects, which are by Nature adapted to our several Faculties. These particular Enjoyments make up the Sum Total of our Happiness: And they are supposed to arise from Riches, Honours, and the Gratification of sensual Appetites: Be it so: Yet none profess themselves so compleatly happy in these Enjoyments, but that there is Room left in the Mind for others, if they were presented to them: Nay these, as much as they engage us, are not thought so high, but that Humane Nature is capable even of greater. Now there have been Persons in all Ages, who have profess'd that they found Satisfaction in the Exercise of Charity, in the Love of their Neighbour, in endeavouring to promote the Happiness of all they had to do with, and in the Pursuit of

of what is just and right and good, as the general Bent of their Mind, and End of their Life; and that doing an Action of Baseness or Cruelty, would be as great Violence to their Self, as much breaking in upon their Nature, as any external Force. Persons of this Character would add, if they might be heard, that they consider themselves as acting in the View of an infinite Being, who is in a much higher Sense the Object of Reverence and of Love, than all the World besides; and therefore they could have no more Enjoyment from a wicked Action done under his Eye, than the Persons to whom they are making their Apology could, if all Mankind were the Spectators of it; and that the Satisfaction of approving themselves to His unerring Judgment, to whom they thus refer all their Actions, is a more continued settled Satisfaction than any this World can afford; as also that they have, no less than Others, a Mind free and open to all the common innocent Gratifications of it, such as they are. And if we go no further, does there appear any Absurdity in this? Will any one take upon him to say, that a Man cannot find his Account in this general Course of Life, as much as in the most unbounded Ambition,

SERM.

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S E R M. Ambition, and the Excesses of Pleasure? Or  
XI. that such a Person has not consulted so well  
for himself, for the Satisfaction and Peace of  
his own Mind, as the ambitious or dissolute  
Man? And though the Consideration, that  
God himself will in the End justify their  
Taste, and support their Cause, is not formally  
to be insisted upon here; yet thus much  
comes in, that all Enjoyments whatever are  
much more clear and unmixt from the Assu-  
rance that they will end well. Is it certain  
then that there is nothing in these Pretensions  
to Happiness? especially when there are not  
wanting Persons, who have supported them-  
selves with Satisfactions of this Kind in Sick-  
ness, Poverty, Disgrace, and in the very  
Pangs of Death; whereas it is manifest all  
other Enjoyments fail in these Circumstances.  
This surely looks suspicious of having some-  
what in it. Self-love methinks should be a-  
larmed. May she not possibly pass over  
greater Pleasures, than those she is so wholly  
taken up with?

T H E short of the Matter is no more than  
this. Happiness consists in the Gratification  
of certain Affections, Appetites, Passions,  
with Objects which are by Nature adapted  
to them. Self-love may indeed set us on  
work

work to gratify these: But Happiness or SERM. Enjoyment has no immediate Connection XI. with Self-love, but arises from such Gratification alone. Love of our Neighbour is one of those Affections. This, considered as a *virtuous Principle*, is gratified by a Consciousness of *endeavouring* to promote the Good of others; but considered as a natural Affection, its Gratification consists in the actual Accomplishment of this Endeavour, Now Indulgence or Gratification of this Affection, whether in that Consciousness, or this Accomplishment, has the same Respect to Interest; as Indulgence of any other Affection; they equally proceed from or do not proceed from Self-love, they equally include or equally exclude this Principle. Thus it appears, that *Benevolence and the Pursuit of publick Good hath at least as great Respect to Self-love and the Pursuit of private Good, as any other particular Passions, and their respective Pursuits.*

NEITHER is Covetousness, whether as a Temper or Pursuit, any Exception to this. For if by Covetousness is meant the Desire and Pursuit of Riches for their own Sake, without any Regard to, or Consideration of the Uses of them; this hath as little to do with

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SERM. with Self-love, as Benevolence hath. But by XI. this Word is usually meant, not such Madness and total Distraction of Mind, but immoderate Affection to and Pursuit of Riches as Possessions in order to some further End: namely, Satisfaction, Interest, or Good. This therefore is not a particular Affection, or particular Pursuit, but it is the general Principle of Self-love, and the general Pursuit of our own Interest; for which Reason, the Word Selfish, is by every one appropriated to this Temper and Pursuit. Now as it is ridiculous to assert, that Self-love and the Love of our Neighbour are the same; so neither is it asserted, that following these different Affections hath the same Tendency and Respect to our own Interest. The Comparison is not between Self-love and the Love of our Neighbour; between Pursuit of our own Interest, and the Interest of others: But between the several particular Affections in Humane Nature, towards external Objects, as one Part of the Comparison; and the one particular Affection to the Good of our Neighbour, as the other Part of it: And it has been shewn, that all these have the same Respect to Self-love and private Interest.

THERE

THE R E is indeed frequently an Incon- SERM.  
sistence or Interfering, between Self-love or XI.  
private Interest, and the several particular  
Appetites, Passions, Affections, or the Pur-  
suits they lead to. But this Competition or  
Interfering is meerly accidental ; and hap-  
pens much oftner between Pride, Revenge,  
sensual Gratifications, and private Interest,  
than between private Interest and Benevo-  
lence. For nothing is more common, than  
to see Men give themselves up to a Passion  
or an Affection to their known Prejudice  
and Ruin, and in direct contradiction to  
manifest and real Interest, and the loudest  
Calls of Self-love : Whereas the seeming Com-  
petitions and Interfering, between Benevo-  
lence and private Interest, relate much more  
to the Materials or Means of Enjoyment,  
than to Enjoyment itself. There is often an  
interfering in the former, when there is none  
in the latter. Thus as to Riches : So much  
Money as a Man gives away, so much less  
will remain in his Possession. Here is a real  
interfering. But though a Man cannot pos-  
sibly give without lessening his Fortune, yet  
there are Multitudes might give without les-  
sening their own Enjoyment ; because they  
may have more than they can turn to any

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real

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SERMON. real Use or Advantage to themselves. Thus,  
XI. the more Thought and Time any one em-  
ploys about the Interests and Good of others,  
he must necessarily have less to attend his  
own; but he may have so ready and large  
a Supply of his own Wants, that such  
Thought might be really useless to himself,  
though of great Service and Assistance to  
Others.

THE general Mistake, that there is some  
greater Inconsistence between endeavouring  
to promote the Good of Another and Self-  
interest, than between Self-interest and pur-  
suing any Thing else, seems, as hath already been  
hinted, to arise from our Notions of Prop-  
erty; and to be carried on by this Proper-  
ty's being supposed to be itself our Happi-  
ness or Good. People are so very much  
taken up with this one Subject, that they  
seem from it to have formed a general way  
of thinking, which they apply to other  
Things that they have nothing to do with.  
Hence, in a confused and slight Way, it  
might well be taken for granted, that Ano-  
ther's having no Interest in an Affection  
(i. e. his Good not being the Object of it)  
renders, as one may speak, the Proprietor's  
Interest

Interest in it greater ; and that if Another SERM. had an Interest in it, this would render his XI.

less, or occasion that such Affection could not be so friendly to Self-love, or conducive to private Goed, as an Affection or Pursuit

which has not a Regard to the Good of Another. This I say might be taken for granted, whilst it was not attended to, that the Object of every particular Affection is

equally somewhat external to Ourselves ; and whether it be the Good of another Person, or whether it be any other external Thing, makes no Alteration with Regard to

its being one's own Affection, and the Gratification of it one's own private Enjoyment. And so far as 'tis taken for granted,

that barely having the Means and Materials of Enjoyment is what constitutes Interest and Happiness ; that our Interest or Good consists in Possessions themselves, in having the

Property of Riches, Houses, Lands, Gardens, not in the Enjoyment of them ; so far 'twill even more strongly be taken for granted,

in the Way already explained, that an Affection's conducing to the Good of another, must even necessarily occasion it to conduce

less to private Good, if not to be positively

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SERM. detrimental to it. For, if Property and Happiness are one and the same Thing, as by increasing the Property of another, you lessen your own Property, so by promoting the Happiness of another, you must lessen your own Happiness. But whatever occasioned the Mistake, I hope it has been fully proved to be one ; as it has been proved, that there is no peculiar Rivalship or Competition between Self-love and Benevolence : that as there may be a Competition between these two, so there may also between any particular Affection whatever and Self-love ; that every particular Affection, Benevolence among the rest, is subservient to Self-love by being the Instrument of private Enjoyment ; and that in one Respect Benevolence contributes more to private Interest, *i. e.* Enjoyment or Satisfaction, than any other of the particular common Affections, as it is in a Degree its own Gratification.

AND to all these Things may be added, That Religion, from whence arises our strongest Obligation to Benevolence, is so far from disowning the Principle of Self-love, that it often addresses itself to that very Principle, and always to the Mind in that State when Reason presides ; and there can no

no Access be had to the Understanding, but SERM.  
by convincing Men, that the Course of XI.  
Life we would persuade them to is not con-  
trary to their Interest. It may be allowed,  
without any Prejudice to the Cause of Virtue  
and Religion, that our Ideas of Happiness  
and Misery are of all our Ideas the nearest  
and most important to us; that they will, nay,  
if you please, that they ought to prevail over  
those of Order, and Beauty, and Harmony,  
and Proportion, if there should ever be, as  
it is impossible there ever should be, any In-  
consistence between them: Though these  
last too, as expressing the Fitness of Actions,  
are real as Truth itself. Let it be allowed,  
though Virtue or moral Rectitude does  
indeed consist in Affection to and Pursuit  
of what is Right and Good, as such; yet,  
that when we sit down in a cool Hour,  
we can neither justify to ourselves this or  
any other Pursuit, till we are convinced that  
it will be for our Happiness, or at least not  
contrary to it.

COMMON Reason and Humanity will  
have some Influence upon Mankind, what-  
ever becomes of Speculations: But, so far as  
the Interests of Virtue depend upon the The-  
ory of it being secured from open Scorn,

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SER.M. so far its very Being in the World depends  
XI. upon its appearing to have no Contrariety to  
private Interest and Self-love. The foregoing  
Observations, therefore, it is hoped, may  
have gained a little Ground in Favour of the  
Precept before us; the particular Explanation  
of which shall be the Subject of the next  
Discourse.

I WILL conclude at present, with observing the peculiar Obligation which we are under to Virtue and Religion, as enforced in the Verses following the Text, in the Epistle for the Day, from our Saviour's coming into the World. *The Night is far spent, the Day is at Hand; let us therefore cast off the Works of Darkness, and let us put on the Armour of Light, &c.* The Meaning and Force of which Exhortation is, that Christianity lays us under new Obligations to a good Life, as by it the Will of God is more clearly revealed, and as it affords additional Motives to the Practice of it, over and above those which arise out of the Nature of Virtue and Vice; I might add, as our Saviour has set us a perfect Example of Goodness in our own Nature. Now Love and Charity is plainly the Thing in which he hath placed his Religion; in which therefore,

fore, as we have any Pretence to the Name of Christians, we must place ours. He hath at once enjoined it upon us by Way of Command with peculiar Force; and by his Example, as having undertaken the Work of our Salvation out of pure Love and Good-will to Mankind. The Endeavour to set home this Example upon our Minds is a very proper Employment of this Season, which is bringing on the Festival of his Birth: Which as it may teach us many excellent Lessons of Humility, Resignation, and Obedience to the Will of God; so there is none it recommends with greater Authority, Force and Advantage, than this of Love and Charity; since it was *for us Men, and for our Salvation, that he came down from Heaven, and was incarnate, and was made Man*; that he might teach us our Duty, and more especially that he might enforce the Practice of it, reform Mankind, and finally bring us to that *eternal Salvation, of which he is the Author to all those that obey him.*



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## SERMON XII.

### *Upon the Love of our Neighbour.*

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R O M. xiii. 9.

*And if there be any other Commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this Saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.*

**H**AVING already removed the Pre-  
SERM.  
judices against publick Spirit, or the  
Love of our Neighbour, on the Side  
of private Interest and Self-love; I proceed  
to the particular Explanation of the Precept  
before us, by shewing, *Who is our Neighbour:*  
*In what Sense we are required to love him*  
*as ourselves: The Influence such Love would*  
*have upon our Behaviour in Life: And lastly,*  
*How this Commandment comprehends in it all*  
*others.*

I. THE

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SER. I. THE Objects and due Extent of this  
XII. Affection will be understood by attending to  
the Nature of it, and to the Nature and Circumstances of Mankind in this World. The Love of our Nighbour is the same with Charity, Benevolence, or Good-will: It is an Affection to the Good and Happiness of our Fellow-creatures. This implies in it a Disposition to produce Happiness: And this is the simple Notion of Goodness, which appears so amiable wherever we meet with it. From hence it is easy to see, that the Perfection of Goodness consists in Love to the whole Universe. This is the Perfection of Almighty God.

BUT as Man is so much limited in his Capacity, as so small a Part of the Creation comes under his Notice and Influence, and as we are not used to consider Things in so general a Way; it is not to be thought of, that the Universe should be the Object of Benevolence to such Creatures as we are. Thus in that Precept of our Saviour, \* *Be ye perfect even as your Father, which is in Heaven is perfect*, the Perfection of the Divine Goodness is proposed to our Imitation as it is promiscuous, and extends to the Evil

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\* Matth. v. 48.

as well as the Good ; not as it is absolutely universal, Imitation of it in this Respect being plainly beyond us. The Object is too vast. For this Reason moral Writers also have substituted a less general Object for our Benevolence, Mankind. But this likewise is an Object too general, and very much out of our View. Therefore Persons more practical, have, instead of Mankind, put our Country ; and made the Principle of Virtue, of Humane Virtue, to consist in the entire uniform Love of our Country : And this is what we call a publick Spirit ; which in Men of publick Stations is the Character of a Patriot. But this is speaking to the upper Part of the World, Kingdoms and Governments are large ; and the Sphere of Action of far the greatest Part of Mankind is much narrower than the Government they live under : Or however, common Men do not consider their Actions as affecting the whole Community of which they are Members. There plainly is wanting a less general and nearer Object of Benevolence for the Bulk of Men, than that of their Country. Therefore the Scripture, not being a Book of Theory and Speculation, but a plain Rule of Life for Mankind, has

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SERM. has with the utmost possible Propriety put the XII. Principle of Virtue upon the Love of our ~~Neighbour~~ Neighbour ; which is that Part of the Universe, that Part of Mankind, that Part of our Country, which comes under our immediate Notice, Acquaintance. and Influence, and with which we have to do.

THIS is plainly the true Account or Reason, why our Saviour places the Principle of Virtue in the Love of our *Neighbour* ; and the Account itself shows who are comprehended under that Relation.

II. LET us now consider in what Sense we are commanded to love our Neighbour *as ourselves*.

THIS Precept, in its first Delivery by our Saviour, is thus introduced : *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine Heart, with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength ; and thy Neighbour as thyself.* These very different Manners of Expression do not lead our Thoughts to the same Measure or Degree of Love, common to both Objects ; but to one, peculiar to each. Supposing then, which is to be supposed, a distinct Meaning and Propriety in the Words, *as thyself* ; the Precept we are considering will admit of any of these Senses : That we bear the *same Kind*

Kind of Affection to our Neighbour, as we SERM. do to ourselves : Or, that the Love we bear XII. to our Neighbour should have *some certain Proportion or other* to Self-love : Or, lastly, that it should bear the particular Proportion of *Equality*, that *it be in the same Degree*.

First, The Precept may be understood as requiring only, that we have the *same Kind of Affection* to our Fellow-creatures, as to ourselves : That, as every Man has the Principle of Self-love, which disposes him to avoid Misery, and consult his own Happiness ; so we should cultivate the Affection of Good-will to our Neighbour, and that it should influence us to have the same Kind of Regard to him. This at least must be commanded : And this will not only prevent our being injurious to him, but will also put us upon promoting his Good. There are Blessings in Life, which we share in common with others ; Peace, Plenty, Freedom, healthful Seasons. But real Benevolence to our Fellow-creatures would give us the Notion of a common Interest in a stricter Sense : For in the Degree we love one another, his Interest, his Joys and Sorrows, are our own. It is from Self-love that we form the Notion of private Good, and consider it as our own :

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SERM. own: Love of our Neighbour would teach  
XII. us thus to appropriate to ourselves his Good  
and Well-fare; to consider ourselves as hav-  
ing a real Share in his Happiness. Thus  
the Principle of Benevolence would be an  
Advocate within our own Breasts, to take  
care of the Interests of our Fellow-Creatures  
in all the interfering and Competitions  
which cannot but be, from the Imperfection  
of our Nature, and the State we are in. It  
would likewise, in some Measure, lessen that  
interfering; and hinder Men from forming  
so strong a Notion of private Good, exclusive  
of the Good of others, as we commonly do.  
Thus, as the private Affection makes us in  
a peculiar Manner sensible of Humanity,  
Justice, or Injustice, when exercised towards  
ourselves; Love of our Neighbour would  
give us the same Kind of Sensibility in his  
Behalf. This would be the greatest Security  
of our uniform Obedience to that most  
equitable Rule; *Whatsoever ye would that  
Men should do unto you, do ye even so unto  
them.*

A L L this is indeed no more than that we  
should have a real Love to our Neighbour:  
But then, which is to be observed, the  
Words, *as thyself*, express this in the most  
distinct

distinct Manner, and determine the Precept to relate to the Affection itself, The Advantage, which this Principle of Benevolence has over other remote Considerations, is that it is itself the Temper of Virtue; and likewise, that it is the chief, nay the only effectual Security of our performing the several Offices of Kindness, we owe to our Fellow-creatures. When from distant Considerations Men resolve upon any Thing to which they have no liking, or perhaps an Averseness, they are perpetually finding out Evasions and Excuses; which need never be wanting, if People look for them: And they equivocate with themselves in the plainest Cases in the World. This may be in respect to single determinate Acts of Virtue: But it comes in much more, where the Obligation is to a general Course of Behaviour; and most of all, if it be such as cannot be reduced to fixed determinate Rules. This Observation may account for the Diversity of the Expression, in that known Passage of the Prophet *Micah*: *To do justly, and to love Mercy.* A Man's Heart must be formed to Humanity and Benevolence, he must love Mercy, otherwise he will not act mercifully in any settled Course of Behaviour.

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SERM. As Consideration of the future Sanctions of  
XII. Religion is our only Security of persevering  
in our Duty, in Cases of great Temptations :  
So to get our Heart and Temper formed to  
a Love and Liking of what is Good, is abso-  
lutely necessary in order to our behaving  
rightly in the familiar and daily Intercourses  
amongst Mankind.

*Secondly*, The Precept before us may be  
understood to require, that we love our  
Neighbour in some certain *Proportion*  
or other, *according as* we love ourselves.  
And indeed a Man's Character cannot be de-  
termined by thy Love he bears to his Neigh-  
bour, considered absolutely : But the Pro-  
portion which this bears to Self-love, whe-  
ther it be attended to or not, is the chief  
Thing which forms the Character, and in-  
fluences the Actions. For, as the Form of  
the Body is a Composition of various Parts ;  
so likewise our inward Structure is not sim-  
ple or uniform, but a Composition of vari-  
ous Passions, Appetites, Affections, together  
with Rationality ; including in this last both  
the Discernment of what is right, and a Dis-  
position to regulate ourselves by it. There is  
greater Variety of Parts in what we call a  
Character, than there are Features in a Face :

And

And the Morality of That is no more determined by one Part, than the Beauty or Deformity of This is by one single Feature: Each is to be judged of by all the Parts or Features, not taken singly, but together. In the inward Frame the various Passions, Appetites, Affections, stand in different Respects to each other. The Principles in our Mind, may be contradictory, or Checks and Allays only, or Incentives and Assistants to each other. And Principles, which in their Nature have no Kind of Contrariety or Affinity, may yet accidentally be each other's Allays or Incentives.

SERM.

XII.

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FROM hence it comes to pass, that though we were able to look into the inward Contexture of the Heart, and see with the greatest Exactness in what Degree any one Principle is in a particular Man; we could not from thence determine, how far that Principle would go towards forming the Character, or what Influence it would have upon the Actions, unless we could likewise discern what other Principles prevailed in him, and see the Proportion which that one bears to the others. Thus, though two Men should have the Affection of Compassion in the same Degree exactly; yet one may have the

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Princi-

SER.M. Principle of Resentment, or of Ambition so strong in him, as to prevail over that of Compassion, and prevents its having any Influence upon his Actions; so that he may deserve the Character of an hard or cruel Man: Whereas the other, having Compassion in just the same Degree only; yet having Resentment or Ambition in a lower Degree, his Compassion may prevail over them, so as to influence his Actions, and to denominate his Temper compassionate. So that, how strange soever it may appear to People who do not attend to the Thing, yet it is quite manifest, that, when we say one Man is more Resenting or Compassionate than another, this does not necessarily imply that one has the Principle of Resentment or of Compassion stronger than the other. For if the Proportion, which Resentment or Compassion bears to other inward Principles, is greater in one than in the other; this is itself sufficient to denominate one more Resenting or Compassionate than the other.

FURTHER, the whole System as I may speak, of Affections, (including Rationality) which constitute the Heart, as this Word is used in Scripture and on moral Subjects, are each and all, of them stronger in some

than

than in others. Now the Proportion which SERM: the two general Affections, Benevolence and XII. Self-love, bear to each other, according to the this Interpretation of the Text, denominates Men's Character as to Virtue. Suppose then one Man to have the Principle of Benevolence in an higher Degree than another : It will not follow from hence, that this general Temper, or Character, or Actions will be more benevolent than the other's. For he may have Self-love in such a Degree as quite to prevail over Benevolence ; so that it may have no Influence at all upon his Actions ; Whereas Benevolence in the other Person, though in a lower Degree, may yet be the strongest Principle in his Heart ; and strong enough to be the Guide of his Actions, so as to denominate him a good and virtuous Man. The Case is here as in Scales : It is not one Weight, considered in itself, which determines whether the Scale shall ascend or descend ; but this depends upon the Proportion, which that one Weight hath to the other.

I T being thus manifest that the Influence which Benevolence has upon our Actions, and how far it goes towards forming our Character, is not determined by the Degree

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SERM. itself of this Principle in our Mind; but  
XII. the Proportion it has to Self-love and other  
Principles: A Comparison also being made  
in the Text between Self-love and the Love  
of our Neighbour; these joint Considerations  
afforded sufficient Occasion for treating here  
of that Proportion: It plainly is implied in  
the Precept, though it should be questioned  
whether it be the exact Meaning of the  
Words, *as Thyself*.

LOVE of our Neighbour then must bear  
some Proportion to Self-love, and Virtue to  
be sure consists in the due Proportion. What  
this due Proportion is, whether as a Principle  
in the Mind, or as exerted in Actions, can be  
judged of only from our Nature and Con-  
dition in this World. Of the Degree in  
which Affections and the Principles of Ac-  
tion, considered in themselves, prevail, we  
have no Measure: Let us then proceed to  
the Course of Behaviour, the Actions they  
produce.

BOT H our Nature and Condition require,  
that each particular Man should make parti-  
cular Provision for himself: And the Inqui-  
ry, what Proportion Benevolence should  
have to Self-love, when brought down to  
Practice, will be, what is a competent Care  
and

and Provision for ourselves. And how certain soever it be, that each Man must determine this for himself; and how ridiculous soever it would be, for any to attempt to determine it for Another: Yet it is to be observed, that the Proportion is real; and that a competent Provision has a Bound; and that it cannot be all which we can possibly get and keep within our Grasp, without legal Injustice. Mankind almost universally bring in Vanity, Supplies for what is called a Life of Pleasure, Covetousness, or imaginary Nations of Superiority over Others, to determine this Question: But every one who desires to act a proper Part in Society, would do well to consider, how far any of them come in to determine it, in the Way of Moral Consideration. All that can be said is, supposing, what, as the World goes, is so much to be supposed that 'tis scarce to be mentioned, that Persons do not neglect what they really owe to Themselves; the more of their Care and Thought, and of their Fortune they employ in doing Good to their Fellow-creatures, the nearer they come up to the Law of Perfection *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.*

SERM.

XII.



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SERM. *Thirdly, If the Words, as thy self, were to*  
XII. *be understood of an Equality of Affection;*  
*it would not be attended with those Conse-*  
*quences, which perhaps may be thought to*  
*follow from it. Suppose a Person to have*  
*the same settled Regard to Others, as to Him-*  
*self; that in every deliberate Scheme or Pur-*  
*suit He took their Interest into the Account*  
*in the same Degree as his own, so far as an*  
*Equality of Affection would produce this:*  
*Yet He would in fact, and ought to be, much*  
*more taken up and employed about Himself,*  
*and his own Concerns; than about Others,*  
*and their Interests. For, besides the one*  
*common Affection toward Himself and his*  
*Neighbour, He would have several other*  
*particular Affections, Passions, Appetites,*  
*which he could not possibly feel in common*  
*both for Himself and Others: Now these Sen-*  
*sations themselves very much employ us;*  
*and have perhaps as great Influence, as Self-*  
*love. So far indeed as Self-love, and cool*  
*Reflection upon what is for our Interest,*  
*would set us on Work to gain a Supply of our*  
*own several Wants; so far the Love of our*  
*Neighbour would make us do the same for*  
*him: But the Degree in which we are put*  
*upon seeking and making use of the Means*  
of

of Gratification, by the feeling of those Affections, Appetites and Passions, must necessarily be peculiar to ourselves. SERM. XII. 

THAT there are particular Passions, (suppose Shame, Resentment) which Men seem to have, and feel in common, both for Themselves and Others, makes no Alteration in Respect to those Passions and Appetites which cannot possibly be thus felt in common. From hence, (and perhaps more Things of the like Kind might be mentioned,) it follows, that though there were an Equality of Affection to both, yet Regards to Ourselves would be more prevalent than Attention to the Concerns of Others.

AND from moral Considerations it ought to be so, supposing still the Equality of Affection commanded: Because we are in a peculiar Manner, as I may speak, entrusted with ourselves; and therefore Care of our own Interests, as well as of our Conduct, particularly belongs to us.

To these Things must be added, that moral Obligations can extend no further than to natural Possibilities. Now we have a Perception of our own Interests, like Consciousness of our own Existence, which we always carry about with us; and which, in its Continu-

SERMON. ation, Kind, and Degree, seems impossible  
XII. to be felt in respect to the Interests of  
Others.

FROM all these Things it fully appears, that though we were to love our Neighbour in the same Degree as we love ourselves, so far as this is possible; yet the Care of ourselves, of the Individual, would not be neglected; the apprehended Danger of which seems to be the only Objection against understanding the Precept in this strict Sense.

III. THE general Temper of Mind which the due Love of our Neighbour would form us to, and the Influence it would have upon our Behaviour in Life, is now to be considered.

THE Temper and Behaviour of Charity is explained at large, in that known Passage of St Paul \*: *Charity suffereth long, and is kind; Charity envieth not, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, thinketh no Evil, beareth all Things, believeth all Things, hopeth all Things.* As to the Meaning of the Expressions, *seeketh not her own, thinketh no Evil, believeth all Things;* however those Expressions may be explained away,

\* 1 Cor. xiii.

way, this Meekness, and, in some Degree SERM.  
Easiness of Temper, Readiness to forego our XII.  
Right for the Sake of Peace, as well as in  
the Way of Compassion, Freedom from  
Mistrust, and Disposition to believe well of  
our Neighbour, this general Temper, I say,  
accompanies, and is plainly the Effect of Love  
and Good-will. And, though such is the  
World in which we live, that Experience  
and Knowledge of it, not only may, but  
must beget in us greater Regard to ourselves,  
and Doubtfulness of the Characters of  
Others, than is natural to Mankind; yet these  
ought not to be carried further than the Na-  
ture and Course of Things make necessary.  
It is still true, even in the present State of  
Things, bad as it is, that a real good Man  
had rather be deceived, than be suspicious;  
had rather forego his known Right, than  
run the Venture of doing even a hard Thing.  
This is the general Temper of that Charity,  
of which the Apostle asserts, that if he had  
it not, giving his *Body to be burned* would  
*avail him nothing*; and which he says, *shall  
never fail.*

THE happy Influence of this Temper ex-  
tends to every different Relation and Cir-  
cumstance in Humane Life. It plainly ren-  
ders

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SERM. ders a Man better, more to be desired, as  
XII. to all the Respects and Relations we can  
stand in to each other. The benevolent  
Man is disposed to make use of all external  
Advantages in such a Manner as shall con-  
tribute to the Good of Others, as well as to  
his own Satisfaction. His own Satisfaction  
consists in this. He will be easy and kind  
to the Dependents, compassionate to the  
Poor and Distressed, friendly to all with  
whom he has to do. This includes the good  
Neighbour, Parent, Master, Magistrate :  
And such a Behaviour would plainly make  
Dependance, Inferiority, and even Servitude,  
easy. So that a good and charitable Man of  
superior Rank in Wisdom, Fortune, Au-  
thority, is a common Blessing to the Place  
he lives in : Happiness grows under his In-  
fluence. This good Principle in Inferiours  
would discover itself in paying Respect,  
Gratitude, Obedience, as due. It were there-  
fore methinks one just Way of trying one's  
own Character, to ask ourselves, Am I in Re-  
ality a better Master or Servant, a better  
Friend, a better Neighbour, than such and  
such Persons ; whom, perhaps, I may think  
not to deserve the Character of Virtue and  
Religion so much as myself ?

AND

AND as to the Spirit of Party, which SERM. unhappily prevails amongst Mankind, whatever are the Distinctions which serve for a Supply to it, some or other of which have obtained in all Ages and Countries: One, who is thus friendly to his Kind, will immediately make due Allowances for it, as what cannot but be amongst such Creatures as Men, in such a World as this. And as Wrath and Fury and overbearing upon these Occasions proceed, as I may speak, from Mens feeling only on their own Side: So a common Feeling, for others as well as for ourselves, would render us sensible to this Truth, which it is strange can have so little Influence; that we ourselves differ from others, just as much as they do from us. I put the Matter in this Way, because it can scarce be expected that the Generality of Men should see, that those Things which are made the Occasions of Dissention and fomenting the Party-Spirit, are really nothing at all: But it may be expected from all People, how much soever they are in earnest about their respective Peculiarities, that Humanity, and common Good-will to their Fellow-creatures, should moderate and restrain that wretched Spirit.

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SERM. THIS good Temper of Charity likewise  
XII. would prevent Strife and Enmity arising from  
other Occasions: It would prevent our giving  
just Cause of Offence, and our taking it  
without Cause. And in Cases of real In-  
jury, a good Man will make all Allowances  
which are to be made; and, without any  
Attempts of Retaliation, he will only consult  
his own and other Mens Security for the  
future, against Injustice and Wrong.

IV. I PROCEED to consider lastly, what  
is affirmed of the Precept now explained,  
That it comprehends in it all others; *i. e.* that  
to love our Neighbour asourselves includes in  
it all Virtues.

NOW the Way in which every Maxim of  
Conduct, or general Speculative Assertion,  
when it is to be explained at large, should be  
treated, is, to show what are the particular  
Truths which were designed to be compre-  
hended under such a general Observation,  
how far it is strictly true; and then the Li-  
mitations, Restrictions, and Exceptions, if  
there be Exceptions, with which it is to be  
understood. But it is only the former of  
these, namely, how far the Assertion in the  
Text holds, and the Ground of the Pre-emi-  
nence assigned to the Precept. of it, which

in

in strictness comes into our present Consideration.

SER.M.

XII.

HOWEVER, in almost every Thing that is said, there is somewhat to be understood beyond what is explicitly laid down, and which we of Course supply ; somewhat, I mean, which would not be commonly called a Restriction or Limitation. Thus, when Benevolence is said to be the Sum of Virtue, it is not spoken of as a blind Propension, but as a Principle in reasonable Creatures, and so to be directed by their Reason : For Reason and Reflection comes into our Notion of a moral Agent. And that will lead us to consider distant Consequences, as well as the immediate Tendency of an Action : It will teach us, that the Care of some Persons, suppose Children and Families, is particularly committed to our Charge by Nature and Providence ; as also that there are other Circumstances, suppose Friendship or former Obligations, which require that we do Good to some, preferably to others. Reason, considered meerly as subservient to Benevolence, as assisting to produce the greatest Good, will teach us to have particular Regard to these Relations and Circumstances ; because it is plainly for the Good of the World

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SERM. World that they should be regarded. And  
XII. as there are numberless Cases, in which,  
~~ notwithstanding Appearances, we are not  
competent Judges, whether a particular Action  
will upon the Whole do Good or Harm ;  
Reason in the same Way will teach us to  
be cautious how we act in these Cases of Un-  
certainty. It will suggest to our Considera-  
tion, which is the safer Side ; how liable we  
are to be led wrong by Passion and private  
Interest ; and what Regard is due to Laws,  
and the Judgment of Mankind. All these  
Things must come into Consideration, were  
it only in order to determine which way of  
acting is likely to produce the greatest  
Good. Thus, upon Supposition that it  
were in the strictest Sense true, without Li-  
mitation, that Benevolence includes in it  
all Virtues ; yet Reason must come in as its  
Guide and Director, in order to attain its own  
End, the End of Benevolence, the greatest  
publick Good. Reason then being thus in-  
cluded, let us now consider the Truth of the  
Assertion itself.

*First*, It is manifest that nothing can be  
of Consequence to Mankind or any Crea-  
ture, but Happiness. This then is all which  
any Person can, in strictness of speaking,  
be

be said to have a Right to. We can therefore *owe no Man any Thing*, but only to further and promote his Happiness, according to our Abilities. And therefore a Disposition and Endeavour to do Good to all with whom we have to do, in the Degree and Manner which the different Relations we stand in to them require, is a Discharge of all the Obligations we are under to them.

As Humane Nature is not one simple uniform Thing, but a Composition of various Parts, Body, Spirit, Appetites, particular Passions and Affections; for each of which reasonable Self-love would lead Men to have due Regard, and make suitable Provision: So Society consists of various Parts, to which we stand in different Respects and Relations; and just Benevolence would as surely lead us to have due Regard to each of these, and behave as the respective Relations require. Reasonable Good-will, and right Behaviour towards our Fellow-creatures, are in a Manner the same: Only that the former expresseth the Principle as it is in the Mind; the latter, the Principle as it were become external, *i. e.* exerted in Actions.

A N D

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SERM. AND so far as Temperance, Sobriety, and  
XII. Moderation in sensual Pleasures, and the  
contrary Vices, have any Respect to our Fel-  
low-creatures, any Influence upon their Quiet,  
Welfare, and Happiness ; as they always  
have a real, and often a near Influence upon  
it ; so far it is manifest those Virtues may be  
produced by the Love of our Neighbour,  
and that the contrary Vices would be pre-  
vented by it. Indeed if Mens Regard to  
themselves will not restrain them from Excess ;  
it may be thought little probable, that their  
Love to others will be sufficient : But the  
Reason is, that their Love to others is not,  
any more than their Regard to themselves,  
just, and in its due Degree. There are how-  
ever manifest Instances of Persons kept sober  
and temperate from Regard to their Affairs,  
and the Welfare of those who depend upon  
them. And it is obvious to every one, that  
habitual Excess, a dissolute Course of Life, im-  
plies a general Neglect of the Duties we owe  
towards our Friends, our Families, and our  
Country.

From hence it is manifest that the com-  
mon Virtues, and the common Vices of  
Mankind, may be traced up to Benevolence,  
or

or the want of it. And this intitles the SERM. Precept, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself*, to the Pre-eminence given to it; and is a Justification of the Apostle's Assertion, that all other Commandments are comprehended in it; whatever Cautions and Restrictions\* there are, which might require

\* For Instance: As we are not competent Judges, what is upon the whole for the Good of the World; there may be other immediate Ends appointed us to pursue, besides that one of doing Good, or producing Happiness. Though the Good of the Creation be the only End of the Author of it, yet he may have laid us under particular Obligations, which we may discern and feel ourselves under, quite distinct from a Perception, that the Observance or Violation of them is for the Happiness or Misery of our Fellow-creatures. And this is in Fact the Case. For there are certain Dispositions of Mind, and certain Actions, which are in themselves approved or disapproved by Mankind, abstracted from the Consideration of their Tendency to the Happiness or Misery of the World; approved or disapproved by Reflection, by that Principle within, which is the Guide of Life, the Judge of Right and Wrong. Numberless Instances of this Kind might be mentioned. There are Pieces of Treachery, which in themselves appear base and detestable to every one. There are Actions, which perhaps can scarce have any other general Name given them than Indecencies, which yet are odious and shocking to Humane Nature. There is such a Thing as Meanness, a little Mind; which, as it is quite distinct from Incapacity, so it raises a Dislike and Disapprobation quite different from that Contempt, which Men are too apt to have, of meer Folly. On the other Hand; what we call Greatness of Mind, is the Object of another Sort of Approbation, than superior Understanding. Fidelity, Honour, strict Justice, are themselves approved in the highest Degree, abstracted from the Consideration

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SERMON. require to be considered, if we were to  
XII. state particularly and at length, what is  
Virtue and right Behaviour in Mankind.  
But,

Secondly, It might be added, that in a higher and more general Way of Consideration, leaving out the particular Nature of Creatures, and the particular Circumstances in which they are placed, Benevolence seems in the strictest Sense to include in it all that is Good and Worthy; all that is Good, which we have any distinct particular Notion of. We have no clear Conception of any positive moral Attribute in the supremest Being, but what may be resolved up into Goodness. And, if we consider a reasonable Creature or moral Agent, without Regard to the particular Relations and Circumstances in which he is placed; we cannot conceive any Thing else to come in towards determining

of their Tendency. Now, whether it may be thought that each of these are connected with Benevolence in Our Nature, and so may be considered as the same Thing with it; or whether some of them be thought an inferiour Kind of Virtues and Vices, somewhat like natural Beauties and Deformities; or lastly, plain Exceptions to the general Rule; thus much however is certain, that the Things now instanced in, and numberless others, are approved or disapproved by Mankind in general, in quite another View than as conducive to the Happiness or Misery of the World.

determining whether he is to be ranked in an higher or lower Class of virtuous Beings, determining whether he is to be ranked in an higher or lower Class of virtuous Beings, but the higher or lower Degree in which that Principle, and what is manifestly connected with it, prevail in him.

SERMON.  
XII.

THAT which we more strictly call Piety, or the Love of God, and which is an essential Part of a right Temper, some may perhaps imagine no Way connected with Benevolence: Yet surely they must be connected, if there be indeed in Being an Object infinitely Good. Humane Nature is so constituted, that every good Affection implies the Love of itself; *i. e.* becomes the Object of a new Affection in the same Person. Thus, to be righteous, implies in it the Love of Righteousness; to be benevolent, the Love of Benevolence; to be good, the Love of Goodness; whether this Righteousness, Benevolence, or Goodness, be viewed as in our own Mind, or in another's: And the Love of God as a Being perfectly Good, is the Love of perfect Goodness contemplated in a Being or Person. Thus Morality and Religion, Virtue and Piety, will at last necessarily coincide, run up into one and the same Point, and *Love* will be in all Senses *the End of the Commandment.*

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SERM.  
XII.  
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*O Almigbey God, inspire us with this divine Principle; kill in us all the Seeds of Envy and Ill-will; and help us, by cultivating within ourselves the Love of our Neighbour, to improve in the Love of Thee. Thou hast placed us in various Kindreds, Friendships, and Relations, as the School of Discipline for our Affections: Help us, by the due Exercise of them, to improve to Perfection; till all partial Affection be lost in that intire universal one, and Thou, O God, shalt be all in all.*

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SERMON

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## SERMON XIII, XIV.

### *Upon the Love of G O D.*

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M A T T H. xxii. 37.

*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind.*

EVERY Body knows, you therefore S E R M. need only just be put in Mind, that XIII. there is such a Thing, as having so ~~~ great Horror of one Extream, as to run insensibly and of Course into the contrary; and that a Doctrine's having been a Shelter for Enthusiasm, or made to serve the Purposes of Superstition, is no Proof of the Falsity of it: Truth or Right being somewhat real in itself, and so not to be judged of by its

SERM. Liableness to Abuse, or by its supposed Di-  
XIII. stance from or Nearness to Error. It may  
~~ be sufficient to have mentioned this in ge-  
neral, without taking Notice of the parti-  
cular Extravagancies, which have been vent-  
ed under the Pretence or Endeavour of ex-  
plaining the Love of God; or how mani-  
festly we are got into the contrary Extream,  
under the Notion of a reasonable Religion;  
so very reasonable, as to have nothing to  
do with the Heart and Affections, if these  
Words signify any thing but the Faculty by  
which we discern speculative Truth.

By the Love of God, I would understand  
all those Regards, all those Affections of  
Mind which are due immediately to him  
from such a Creature as Man, and which  
rest in him as their End. As this does not  
include servile Fear; so neither will any  
other Regards, how reasonable soever, which  
respect any Thing out of or besides the Per-  
fection of the divine Nature, come into  
Consideration here. But all Fear is not ex-  
cluded, because his Displeasure is itself the  
natural proper Object of Fear. Reverence,  
Ambition of his Love and Approbation, De-  
light in the Hope or Consciousness of it,  
come likewise into this Definition of the  
Love

Love of God ; because he is the natural Object of all those Affections or Movements of Mind, as really as he is the Object of the Affection, which is in the strictest Sense called Love ; and all of them equally rest in him, as their End. And they may all be understood to be implied in these Words of our Saviour, without putting any Force upon them : For he is speaking of the Love of God and our Neighbour, as containing the whole of Piety and Virtue.

It is plain that the Nature of Man is so constituted, as to feel certain Affections upon the Sight or Contemplation of certain Objects. Now the very Notion of Affection implies resting in its Object as an End. And the particular Affection to good Characters, Reverence and moral Love of them, is natural to all those who have any Degree of real Goodness in themselves. This will be illustrated by the Description of a perfect Character in a Creature ; and by considering the Manner, in which a good Man in his Presence would be affected towards such a Character. He would of Course feel the Affections of Love, Reverence, Desire of his Approbation, Delight in the Hope or Consciousness of it. And surely all this is appli-

SERM. applicable, and may be brought up to that XIII. Being, who is infinitely more than an adequate Object of all those Affections; whom we are commanded to *Love with all our Heart, with all our Soul, and with all our Mind.* And of these Regards towards Almighty God, some are more particular suitable to and becoming so imperfect a Creature as Man, in this mortal State we are passing through; and some of them, and perhaps other Excesses of the Mind, will be the Employment and Happiness of Good Men in a State of Perfection.

THIS is a general View of what the following Discourse will contain. And it is manifest the Subject is a real one: There is nothing in it enthusiastical or unreasonable. And if it be indeed at all a Subject, it is one of the utmost importance.

As Mankind have a Faculty by which they discern speculative Truth; so we have various Affections towards external Objects. Understanding and Temper, Reason and Affection, are as distinct Ideas, as Reason and Hunger; and one would think could no more be confounded. It is by Reason that we get the Ideas of several Objects of our Affections; But in these Cases Reason and Affection

Affection are no more the same, than Sight SERM: of a particular Object, and the Pleasure or XIII. Uneasiness consequent thereupon, are the ~~same~~ same. Now, as Reason tends to and rests in the Discernment of Truth, the Object of it; so the very Nature of Affection consists in tending towards, and resting in, its Objects as an End. We do indeed often in common Language say, that Things are loved, desired, esteemed, not for themselves; but for somewhat further, somewhat out of and beyond them: Yet, in these Cases, who-  
ever will attend, will see, that these Things are not in Reality the Objects of the Af-  
fections, *i. e.* are not loved, desired, esteemed, but the somewhat further and beyond them. If we have no Affections which rest in what are called their Objects, then what is called Affection, Love, Desire, Hope, in Humane Nature, is only an Uneasiness in being at Rest; an unquiet Disposition to Action, Progress, Pursuit, without End or Meaning. But if there be any such Thing as Delight in the Company of one Person; rather than of another; whether in the Way of Friendship, or Mirth and Entertain-  
ment, it is all one, if it be without respect to Fortune, Honour, or increasing our Stores of

SERM. of Knowledge, or any Thing beyond the  
XIII. present Time ; here is an Instance of an Af-  
fection absolutely resting in its Object as its  
End, and being gratified, in the same Way  
as the Appetite of Hunger is satisfied with  
Food. Yet nothing is more common than to  
hear it asked, What Advantage a Man hath in  
such a Course, suppose of Study, particular  
Friendships, or in any other ; nothing, I say,  
is more common than to hear such a Question  
put in a Way which supposes no Gain,  
Advantage or Interest, but as a Means to  
somewhat further : And if so, then there is  
no such Thing at all as real Interest, Gain or  
Advantage. This is the same Absurdity  
with Respect to Life, as an infinite Series of  
Effects without a Cause is in Speculation.  
The Gain, Advantage or Interest consists in  
the Delight itself, arising from such a Facul-  
ty's having its Object : Neither is there any  
such Thing as Happiness or Enjoyment, but  
what arises from hence. The Pleasures of  
Hope and of Reflection are not Exceptions :  
The former being only this Happiness anti-  
cipated ; the latter, the same Happiness en-  
joyed over again after its Time. And even  
the general Expectation of future Happiness  
can

can afford Satisfaction, only as it is a present Object to the Principle of Self-love.

SERM.  
XIII.  
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IT was doubtless intended, that Life should be very much a Pursuit to the Gross of Mankind. But this is carried so much further than is reasonable, that what gives immediate Satisfaction, *i. e.* our present Interest, is scarce considered as our Interest at all. It is Inventions which have only a remote Tendency towards Enjoyment, perhaps but a remote Tendency towards gaining the Means only of Enjoyment, which are chiefly spoken of as useful to the World. And though this way of thinking were just with respect to the imperfect State we are now in, where we know so little of Satisfaction without Satiety ; yet it must be guarded against, when we are considering the Happiness of a State of Perfection ; which Happiness being Enjoyment and not Hope, must necessarily consist in this, that our Affections have their Objects, and rest in those Objects as an End, *i. e.* be satisfied with them. This will further appear in the Sequel of this Discourse.

OF the several Affections, or inward Sensations, which particular Objects excite in Man, there are some, the having of which implies the Love of them, when they are reflected

SERMON reflected upon \*. This cannot be said of all XII. our Affections, Principles and Motives of Action. It were ridiculous to assert, that a Man upon Reflection hath the same Kind of Approbation of the Appetite of Hunger, or the Passion of Fear, as he hath of Good-will to his Fellow-creatures. To be a just, a good, a righteous Man, plainly carries with it a peculiar Affection to, or Love of Justice, Goodness, Righteousness, when these Principles are the Objects of Contemplation. Now if a Man approves of, or hath an Affection to, any Principle in and for itself, incidental Things allowed for, it will be the same whether he views it in his own Mind or in another; in himself, or in his Neighbour. This is the Account of our Approbation of, our moral Love and Affection to good Characters; which cannot but be in those who have any Degrees of real Goodness in themselves, and who discern and take Notice of the same Principle in others.

\* St Austin observes, *Amor ipse ordinate amandus est, quo bene amatur quod amandum est, ut sit in nobis Virtus qua vivitur bene.* i. e. *The Affection which we rightly have for what is lovely, must ordinate justly, in due Manner, and Proportion, become the Object of a new Affection, or be itself beloved, in order to our being endued with that Virtue which is the Principle of a good Life.* Civ. Dei. L. 15. c. 22.

FROM Observation of what passes with- SERM.  
in ourselves, our own Actions, and the Be- XIII.  
haviour of others, the Mind may carry on  
its Reflections as far as it pleases; much be-  
yond what we experience in ourselves, or dis-  
cern in our Fellow-creatures. It may go on,  
and consider Goodness as become an uniform  
continued Principle of Action, as conducted  
by Reason, and forming a Temper and Cha-  
racter absolutely good and perfect, which is in  
a higher Sense excellent, and proportionably  
the Object of Love and Approbation.

LET us then suppose a Creature perfect  
according to his created Nature: Let his Form  
be Humane, and his Capacities no more than  
equal to those of the Chief of Men: Good-  
ness shall be his proper Character; with  
Wisdom to direct it, and Power within some  
certain determined Sphere of Action to ex-  
ert it: But Goodness must be the simple  
actuating Principle within him; this being  
the moral Quality which is amiable, or the  
immediate Object of Love as distinct from  
other Affections of Approbation. Here then  
is a finite Object for our Mind to tend to-  
wards, to exercise itself upon: A Creature,  
perfect according to his Capacity, fixt, stea-  
dy, equally unmoved by weak Pity or more  
weak

SERM. weak Fury and Resentment ; forming the  
XIII. justest Scheme of Conduct ; going on un-  
distubed in the Execution of it, through  
the several Methods of Severity and Reward,  
towards his End, namely, the general Hap-  
piness of all with whom he hath to do, as  
in itself right and valuable. This Character,  
though uniform in itself, in its Principle, yet  
exerting itself in different Ways, or consi-  
dered in different Views, may by its appear-  
ing Variety move different Affections. Thus,  
the Severity of Justice would not affect us  
in the same Way, as an Act of Mercy : The  
adventitious Qualities of Wisdom and Power  
may be considered in themselves : And even  
the Strength of Mind, which this immove-  
able Goodness supposes, may likewise be  
viewed as an Object of Contemplation, dis-  
tinct from the Goodness itself. Superiour  
Excellence of any Kind, as well as superiour  
Wisdom and Power, is the Object of Awe  
and Reverence to all Creatures, whatever  
their moral Character be : But so far as Crea-  
tures of the lowest Rank were good, so far  
the View of this Character, as simply good,  
must appear amiable to them, be the Object  
of, or beget Love. Further, suppose we were  
conscious, that this superiour Person so far  
approved

approved of us, that we had nothing servilely to fear from him ; that he was really our Friend, and kind and good to us in particular, as he had occasionally Intercourse with us : We must be other Creatures than we are, or we could not but feel the same Kind of Satisfaction and Enjoyment (whatever would be the Degree of it) from this higher Acquaintance and Friendship, as we feel from common ones ; the Intercourse being real, and the Persons equally present, in both Cases. We should have a more ardent Desire to be approved by his better Judgment, and a Satisfaction in that Approbation of the same Sort with what would be felt in respect to common Persons, or be wrought in us by their Presence.

LET us now raise the Character, and suppose this Creature, for we are still going on with the Supposition of a Creature, our proper Guardian and Governour ; that we were in a Progress of Being towards somewhat further ; and that his Scheme of Government was too fast for our Capacities to comprehend ; rememb'ring still that he is perfectly Good, and our Friend as well as our Governour. Wisdom, Power, Goodness, accidentally viewed any where, would inspire

SERM. inspire Reverence, Awe, Love: And as these  
XIII. Affections would be raised in higher or lower  
~~ Degrees, in proportion as we had occasionally  
more or less Intercourse with the Creature  
endued with those Qualities; so this further  
Consideration and Knowledge, that he was  
our proper Guardian and Governour, would  
much more bring these Objects and Qua-  
lities home to ourselves; teach us they had  
a greater Respect to us in particular, that we  
had an higher Interest in that Wisdom and  
Power and Goodness. We should, with Joy,  
Gratitude, Reverence, Love, Trust, and  
Dependance, appropriate the Character, as  
what he had a Right in; and make our  
Boast in such our Relation to it. And the  
Conclusion of the whole would be, that we  
should refer ourselves implicitly to him, and  
cast ourselves entirely upon him. As the  
whole Attention of Life should be to obey  
his Commands; so the highest Enjoyment  
of it must arise from the Contemplation of  
this Character, and our Relation to it, from  
a Consciousness of his Favour and Appro-  
bation, and from the Exercise of those Af-  
fections towards Him which could not but  
be raised from his Presence. A Being who  
hath these Attributes, who stands in this Re-  
lation,

lation, and is thus sensibly present to the SERM.  
Mind, must necessarily be the Object of these XIII.  
Affections : There is as real a Correspondence   
between them, as between the lowest App-  
petite of Sense and its Object.

THAT this Being is not a Creature, but the Almighty God ; that he is of infinite Power and Wisdom and Goodness, does not render him less the Object of Reverence and Love, than he would be if he had those Attributes only in a limited Degree. The Being who made us, and upon whom we entirely depend, is the Object of some Regards. He hath given us certain Affections of Mind, which correspond to Wisdom, Power, Goodness ; *i. e.* which are raised upon View of those Qualities. If then he be really wise, powerful, good ; he is the natural Object of those Affections, which he hath endued us with, and which correspond to those Attributes. That he is infinite in Power, perfect in Wisdom and Goodness, makes no Alteration, but only that he is the Object of those Affections raised to the highest Pitch. He is not indeed to be discerned by any of our Senses. *I go forward, but he is not there ; and backward, but I cannot perceive him : On the left hand where he*

SERM. doth work, but I cannot behold him : He bi-  
XIII. deth himself on the right hand, that I can-  
not see him. O that I knew where I might  
find him ! that I might come even to his  
Seat ! \* But is He then a far off : Does he  
not fill Heaven and Earth with his Presence ?  
The Presence of our Fellow-creatures affects  
our Senses, and our Senses give us the Know-  
ledge of their Presence ; which hath diffe-  
rent Kinds of Influence upon us ; Love, Joy,  
Sorrow, Restraint, Encouragement, Reve-  
rence. However this Influence is not imme-  
diately from our Senses, but from that  
Knowledge. Thus suppose a Person neither  
to see nor hear Another, not to know by  
any of his Senses, but yet certainly to know,  
that Another was with him ; this Knowledge  
might, and in many Cases would, have one  
or more of the Effects before-mentioned.  
It is therefore not only reasonable, but also  
natural, to be affected with a Presence,  
though it be not the Object of our Senses :  
Whether it be, or be not, is merely an acci-  
dental Circumstance, which needs not come  
into Consideration : It is the Certainty that  
He is with us, and we with him, which hath  
the Influence. We consider Persons then as  
present,

\* Job xxii.



present, not only when they are within Reach of our Senses, but also when we are assured by any other Means that They are within such a Nearness; nay, if they are not, we can recall them to our Mind, and be moved towards them at present: And must He, who is so much more intimately with us, that *in Him we live and move and have our Being*, be thought too distant to be the Object of our Affections? We own and feel the Force of amiable and worthy Qualities in our Fellow-creatures: And can we be insensible to the Contemplation of perfect Goodness? Do we reverence the Shadows of Greatness here below, are we sollicitous about Honour and Esteem and the Opinion of the World: And shall we not feel the same with Respect to Him, whose are Wisdom and Power in their Original, who *is the God of Judgment by whom Actions are weighed?* Thus Love, Reverence, Desire of Esteem, every Faculty, every Affection, tends towards, and is employed about its respective Object in common Cases: And must the Exercise of them be suspended with Regard to him alone, who is an Object, an infinitely more than adequate Object, to our most exalted Faculties; Him,

SERM. *of whom, and through whom, and to whom are*  
XIII. *all Things?*

As we cannot remove from this Earth, or change our general Business on it, so neither can we alter our real Nature. Therefore no Exercise of the Mind can be recommended, but only the Exercise of those Faculties you are conscious of. Religion does not demand new Affections, but only claims the Direction of those you already have, those Affections you daily feel; though unhappily confined to Objects, not altogether unsuitable, but altogether unequal to them. We only represent to you the higher, the adequate Objects of those very Faculties and Affections. Let the Man of Ambition go on still to consider Disgrace as the greatest Evil; Honour, as his chief Good. But Disgrace, in whose Estimation! Honour, in whose Judgment? This is the only Question. If Shame, and Delight in Esteem be spoken of as real, as any settled Ground of Pain or Pleasure; both these must be in Proportion to the supposed Wisdom and Worth of him, by whom we are contemned or esteemed. Must it then be thought enthusiastical to speak of a Sensibility of this Sort, which shall have respect to an unerring Judgment, to infinite Wisdom;

dom; when we are assured This unerring Judgment, This infinite Wisdom does observe upon our Actions?

SERM.

XIII.

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'Tis the same with respect to the Love of God in the strictest and most confined Sense. We only offer and represent the highest Object of an Affection, supposed already in your Mind. Some Degree of Goodness must be previously supposed: This always implies the Love of itself, an Affection to Goodness: The highest, the adequate Object of this Affection, is perfect Goodness; which therefore we are to *love with all our Heart, with all our Soul, and with all our Strength.* "Must we then, forgetting our own Interest, "as it were go out of ourselves, and love God "for his own Sake?" No more forget your own Interest, no more go out of yourselves than when you prefer one Place, one Prospect, the Conversation of one Man to that of Another. Does not every Affection necessarily imply, that the Object of it be itself loved? If it be not, 'tis not the Object of the Affection. You may and ought if you can, but it is a great Mistake to think you can love or fear or hate any Thing, from Consideration that such Love or Fear or Hatred may be a Means of obtaining Good or avoid-

SERMON. ing Evil. But the Question, whether we  
XIII. ought to love God for his Sake or for our  
own, being a mere Mistake in Language ;  
the real Question, which this is mistaken for,  
will, I suppose, be answered by observing,  
that the Goodness of God already exercised  
towards us, our present Dependance upon  
him, and our Expectation of future Benefits,  
ought, and have a natural Tendency, to beget  
in us the Affection of Gratitude, and greater  
Love towards Him, than the same Goodness  
exercised towards others: were it only for  
this Reason, that every Affection is moved in  
Proportion to the Sense we have of the Ob-  
ject of it ; and we cannot but have a more  
lively Sense of Goodness, when exercised to-  
wards ourselves, than when exercised to  
others. I added Expectation of future Be-  
nefits, because the Ground of that Expecta-  
tion is present Goodness.

Thus Almighty God is the natural Ob-  
ject of the several Affections, Love, Reve-  
rence, Fear, Desire of Approbation. For  
though He is simply One, yet we cannot but  
consider Him in partial and different Views.  
He is in Himself one uniform Being, and for  
ever the same without *Variableness or Sha-  
dow of Turning*: But his infinite Greatness,  
His

His Goodness, His Wisdom, are different SERM. Objects to our Mind. To which is to be XIII. added, that from the Changes in our own Characters, together with his Unchangeableness, we cannot but consider ourselves as more or less the Objects of His Approbation, and really be so. For if he approves what is Good, He cannot, meerly from the Unchangeableness of his Nature, approve what is Evil. Hence must arise more various Movements of Mind, more different Kinds of Affections. And this greater Variety also is just and reasonable in such Creatures as we are, though it respects a Being simply one, good and perfect. As some of these Affections are most particularly suitable to so imperfect a Creature as Man, in this mortal State we are passing through; so there may be other Exercises of Mind, or some of these in higher Degrees, our Employment and Happiness in a State of Perfection.

CONSIDER then our Ignorance, the SERM. Imperfection of our Nature, our Virtue and XIV. our Condition in this World, with respect to an infinitely good and just Being, our Creator and Governour; and you will see what religious Affections of Mind are most par-

T 4 ticularly

SERM. ticularly suitable to this mortal State we are  
XIV. passing through.

THOUGH we are not affected with any thing so strongly, as what we discern with our Senses ; and though our Nature and Condition require, that we be much taken up about sensible Things ; yet our Reason convinces us that God is present with us, and we see and feel the Effects of his Goodness : He is therefore the Object of some Regards. The Imperfection of our Virtue, joined with the Consideration of his absolute Rectitude or Holiness, will scarce permit that Perfection of Love, which entirely casts out all Fear : Yet Goodness in the Object of Love to all Creatures who have any Degree of it themselves ; and Consciousness of a real Endeavour to approve ourselves to Him, joined with the Consideration of his Goodness, as it quite excludes servile Dread and Horror, so it is plainly a reasonable Ground for Hope of his Favour. Neither Fear, nor Hope, nor Love then are excluded : And one or another of these will prevail, according to the different Views we have of God ; and ought to prevail, according to the Changes we find in our own Character. There is a Temper of Mind made up of, or which

which follows from all three, Fear, Hope, SERM.  
Love; namely, Resignation to the Divine XIV.  
Will, which is the general Temper belonging  
to this State; which ought to be the habitual  
Frame of our Mind and Heart, and to be ex-  
ercised at proper Seasons more distinctly, in  
Acts of Devotion.

RESIGNATION to the Will of God  
is the whole of Piety: It includes in it all that  
is good, and is a Source of the most settled  
Quiet and Composure of Mind. There is  
the general Principle of Submission in our  
Nature. Man is not so constituted as to de-  
sire Things, and be uneasy in the Want of  
them, in Proportion to their known Value:  
Many other Considerations come in to deter-  
mine the Degrees of Desire; particularly,  
whether the Advantage we take a View of,  
be within the Sphere of our Rank. Who  
ever felt Uneasiness, upon observing any of  
the Advantages Brute Creatures have over  
us? And yet it is plain they have several. It  
is the same with respect to Advantages be-  
longing to Creatures of a superiour Order.  
Thus, though we see a Thing to be highly  
valuable, yet that it does not belong to our  
Condition of Being, is sufficient to suspend  
our Desires after it, to make us rest satisfied  
without

SERM. without such Advantage. Now there is just  
XIV. the same Reason for quiet Resignation in the  
~~~ Want of every thing equally unattainable,  
and out of our Reach in particular, though  
others of our Species be possessed of it.  
All this may be applied to the Whole of  
Life; to positive Inconveniences as well as  
Wants; not indeed to the Sensations of Pain  
and Sorrow, but to all the Uneasinesses  
of Reflection, Murmuring and Discontent.  
Thus is Humane Nature formed to Compli-  
ance, Yielding, Submission of Temper. We  
find the Principles of it within us; and every  
one exercises it towards some Objects or other;  
*i. e.* feels it with Regard to some Persons, and  
some Circumstances. Now this is an excel-  
lent Foundation of a reasonable and religious  
Resignation. Nature teaches and inclines us  
to take up with our Lot: The Conside-  
ration, that the Course of Things is un-  
alterable, hath a Tendency to quiet the  
Mind under it, to beget a Submission of  
Temper to it. But when we can add,  
that this unalterable Course is appointed  
and continued by infinite Wisdom and  
Goodness; how absolute should be our  
Submission, how intire our Trust and De-  
pendance?

THIS

THIS would reconcile us to our Condition ; prevent all the supernumerary Troubles arising from Imagination, distant Fears, Impatience ; all Uneasiness, except that which necessarily arises from the Calamities themselves we may be under. How many of our Cares should we by this Means be disburthened of ? Cares not properly our own, how apt soever they may be to intrude upon us, and we to admit them ; the Anxieties of Expectation, Sollicitude about Success and Disappointment, which in Truth are none of our Concern. How open to every Gratification would that Mind be, which was clear of these Incumbrances ?

OUR Resignation to the Will of God may be said to be perfect, when our Will is lost and resolved up into His ; when we rest in his Will as our End, as being itself most just, and right, and good. And where is the Impossibility of such an Affection to what is just, and right, and good, such a Loyalty of Heart to the Governour of the Universe, as shall prevail over all sinister indirect Desires of our own ? Neither is this at bottom any thing more than Faith, and Honesty, and Fairness of Mind ; in a more enlarged Sense indeed, than those Words are commonly used.

SERM. used. And as, in common Cases, Fear and  
XIV. Hope and other Passions are raised in us  
by their respective Objects: So this Submission  
of Heart and Soul and Mind, this religious Resignation, would be as naturally produced by our having just Conceptions of Almighty God, and a real Sense of his Presence with us. In how low a Degree soever this Temper usually prevails amongst Men, yet it is a Temper right in itself: It is what we owe to our Creator: It is particularly suitable to our mortal Condition, and what we should endeavour after for our own Sakes in our Passage through such a World as this; where is nothing upon which we can rest or depend; nothing but what we are liable to be deceived and disappointed in. Thus we might *acquaint ourselves with God, and be at Peace.* This is Piety and Religion in the strictest Sense, considered as an Habit of Mind: An habitual Sense of God's Presence with us; being affected towards him, as present, in the Manner his superior Nature requires from such a Creature as Man: This is to *walk with God.*

LITTLE more need be said of Devotion or religious Worship, than that it is this Temper exerted into Act. The Nature of it consists



consists in the actual Exercise of those Affections towards God, which are supposed habitual in good Men. He is always equally present with us: But we are so much taken up with sensible Things, that *Lo, He goeth by us, and we see him not: He passeth on also, but we perceive him not* \*. Devotion is Retirement, from the World he has made, to him alone: It is to withdraw from the Avocations of Sense, to employ our Attention wholly upon Him as upon an Object actually present, to yield ourselves up to the Influence of the Divine Presence, and to give full Scope to the Affections of Gratitude, Love, Reverence, Trust and Dependence; of which infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness, is the natural and only adequate Object. We may apply to the whole of Devotion those Words of the Son of *Sirach*, *When you glorifie the Lord, exalt him as much as you can; for even yet will he far exceed: and when you exalt him, put forth all your Strength, and be not weary; for you can never go far enough* †. Our most raised Affections of every Kind cannot but fall short and be disproportionate, when an infinite Being is the Object of them. This is  
the

\* Job ix. 11.

† Ecclus. xlivi 30.

SERM. the highest Exercise and Employment of  
XIV. Mind, that a Creature is capable of. As this  
Divine Service and Worship is itself absolutely  
due to God, so also is it necessary in order to a  
further End, to keep alive upon our Minds  
a Sense of his Authority, a Sense that in our  
ordinary behaviour amongst Men we act under  
him as our Governour and Judge.

THUS you see the Temper of Mind respecting God, which is particularly suitable to a State of Imperfection; to Creatures in a Progress of Being towards somewhat further.

SUPPOSE now this something further attained; that we were arrived at it: What a Perception will it be, to see and know and feel that our Trust was not vain, our Dependance not groundless? That the Issue, Event, and Consummation came out such as fully to justify and answer that Resignation? If the obscure View of the divine Perfection, which we have in this World, ought in just consequence to beget an intire Resignation; what will this Resignation be exalted into, when *we shall see Face to Face, and know as we are known?* If we cannot form any distinct Notion of that Perfection of the Love of God, which *casts out all Fear*; of that Enjoyment of him, which will be the Happiness of

of

of good Men hereafter ; the Consideration of our Wants and Capacities of Happiness, and that He will be an adequate Supply to them, must serve us instead of such distinct Conception of the particular Happiness itself.

SERM.  
XIV.  
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LET us then suppose a Man intirely disengaged from Business and Pleasure, sitting down alone and at leisure, to reflect upon himself and his own Condition of Being. He would immediately feel that he was by no Means compleat of himself, but totally insufficient for his own Happiness. One may venture to affirm that every Man hath felt this, whether he hath again reflected upon it or not. It is feeling this Deficiency, that they are unsatisfied with themselves, which makes Men look out for Assistance from abroad ; and which has given Rise to various Kinds of Amusements, altogether needless any otherwise than as they serve to fill up the Blank Spaces of Time, and so hinder their feeling this Deficiency, and being uneasie with Themselves. Now, if these external Things we take up with, were really an adequate Supply to this Deficiency of Humane Nature, if by their Means our Capacities and Desires were all satisfied and filled up ; then it might be truly said, that we had found out the proper

SERM. per Happiness of Man ; and so might sit down  
XIV. satisfied, and be at Rest in the Enjoyment of  
it. But if it appears, that the Amusements,  
which Men usually pass their Time in, are so  
far from coming up to, or answering our  
Notions and Desires of Happiness, or Good,  
that they are really no more than what they  
are commonly called, somewhat to pass away  
the Time ; *i. e.* somewhat which serves to  
turn us aside from, and prevent our attending  
to this our internal Poverty and Want ; if  
they serve only, or chiefly, to suspend, in-  
stead of satisfying our Conceptions and De-  
sires of Happiness ; if the Want remains,  
and we have found out little more than barely  
the Means of making it less sensible ; then  
are we still to seek for somewhat to be an  
adequate Supply to it. It is plain that there  
is a Capacity in the Nature of Man, which  
neither Riches, nor Honours, nor sensual  
Gratifications, nor any Thing in this World  
can perfectly fill up, or satisfie : There is a  
deeper and more essential Want, than any  
of these Things can be the Supply of. Yet  
surely there is a Possibility of Somewhat,  
which may fill up all our Capacities of Hap-  
piness ; Somewhat, in which our Souls may  
find Rest ; Somewhat, which may be to us  
that

that satisfactory Good we are inquiring after. But it cannot be any Thing which is valuable only as it tends to some further End. Those therefore who have got this World so much into their Hearts, as not to be able to consider Happiness as consisting in any Thing but Property and Possessions, which are only valuable as the Means to somewhat else, cannot have the least Glimpse of the Subject before us; which is the End, not the Means; the Thing itself, not somewhat in order to it. But if you can lay aside that general, confused, undeterminate Notion of Happiness, as consisting in such Possessions; and fix in your Thoughts, that it really can consist in nothing but in a Faculty's having its proper Object; you will clearly see, that in the coolest Way of Consideration, without either the Heat of fanciful Enthusiasm, or the Warmth of real Devotion, nothing is more certain, than that an infinite Being may Himself be, if He pleases, the Supply to all the Capacities of our Nature. All the common Enjoyments of Life are from the Faculties He hath endued us with, and the Objects He hath made suitable to them. He may Himself be to us infinitely more than all these: He may be to us all that we want.

U

As

SERM. As our Understanding can contemplate itself, XIV. and our Affections be exercised upon themselves by Reflection, so may each be employed in the same Manner upon any other Mind: And since the Supream Mind, the Author and Cause of all Things, is the highest possible Object to Himself, He may be an adequate Supply to all the Faculties of our Souls; a Subject to our Understanding, and an Object to our Affections.

CONSIDER then: When we shall have put off this mortal Body, when we shall be divested of sensual Appetites, and those Possessions which are now the Means of Gratification shall be of no Avail; when this restless Scene of Business and vain Pleasures, which now diverts us from ourselves, shall be all over; We, our proper Self, shall still remain: We shall still continue the same Creatures we are, with Wants to be supplied, and Capacities of Happiness. We must have Faculties of Perception, though not sensitive ones; and Pleasure or Uneasiness from our Perceptions, as now we have.

THESE are certain Ideas, which we express by the Words, Order, Harmony, Proportion, Beauty, the furthest removed from any thing sensual. Now what is there in those

those intellectual Images, Forms, or Ideas, SERM. which begets that Approbation, Love, De- XIV. light, and even Rapture, which is seen in some Persons Faces upon having those Objects present to their Minds?—“Mere En-“ thusiasm!”—Be it what it will: There are Objects, Works of Nature and of Art, which all Mankind have Delight from, quite distinct from their affording Gratification to sensual Appetites; and from quite another View of them, than as being for their Interest and fur-ther Advantage. The Faculties from which we are capable of these Pleasures, and the Pleasures themselves, are as natural, and as much to be accounted for, as any sensual Ap-petite whatever, and the Pleasure from its Gratification. Words to be sure are wanting upon this Subject: To say, that every Thing of Grace and Beauty throughout the whole of Nature, every Thing excellent and amia-ble shared in differently lower Degrees by the whole Creation, meet in the Author and Cause of all Things; this is an inadequate, and perhaps improper Way of speaking of the Divine Nature: But 'tis manifest that ab-solute Rectitude, the Perfection of Being, must be in all Senses, and in every Respect the highest Object to the Mind.

IN this World it is only the Effects of Wisdom and Power and Greatness, which we discern: It is not impossible, that hereafter the Qualities Themselves in the Supream Being may be the immediate Object of Contemplation. What amazing Wonders are opened to View by late Improvements! What an Object is the Universe to a Creature, if there be a Creature who can comprehend its System! But it must be an infinitely higher Exercise of the Understanding, to view the Scheme of it in that Mind, which projected it, before its Foundations were laid. And surely we have Meaning to the Words, when we speak of going further; and viewing, not only this System in His Mind, but the Wisdom and Intelligence itself from whence it proceeded. The same may be said of Power. But since Wisdom and Power are not God, He is a wise, a powerful Being; the Divine Nature may therefore be a further Object to the Understanding. It is nothing to observe that our Senses give us but an imperfect Knowledge of Things: Effects themselves, if we knew them thoroughly, would give us but imperfect Notions of Wisdom and Power; much less of his Being, in whom they reside. I am not speaking of any fanciful

ciful Notion of seeing all Things in God ; SERM. but only representing to you, how much an higher Object to the Understanding an infinite Being himself is, than the Things which He has made : And this is no more than saying, that the Creator is superiour to the Works of his Hands.

THIS may be illustrated by a low Example. Suppose a Machine, the Sight of which would raise, and Discoveries in its Contrivance gratify, our Curiosity : the real Delight, in this Case, would arise from its being the Effect of Skill and Contrivance. This Skill in the Mind of the Artificer would be an higher Object, if we had any Senses or Ways to discern it. For, observe, the Contemplation of that Principle, Faculty or Power which produced any Effect, must be an higher Exercise of the Understanding, than the Contemplation of the Effect itself. The Cause must be an higher Object to the Mind than the Effect.

BUT whoever considers distinctly what the Delight of Knowledge is, will see Reason to be satisfied that it cannot be the chief Good of Man : All this, as it is applicable, so it was mentioned with Regard to the Attribute of Goodness. I say, Goodness. Our

SERM. Being and all our Enjoyments are the Effects  
XIV. of it: Just Men bear its Resemblance: But  
how little do we know of the Original, of  
what it is in itself? Recall what was before  
observed concerning the Affection to moral  
Characters; which, in how low a Degree  
soever, yet is plainly natural to Man, and  
the most excellent Part of his Nature: Sup-  
pose this improved, as it may be improved,  
to any Degree whatever, in the *Spirits of*  
*just Men made perfect*; and then suppose that  
they had a real View of that *Righteousness*,  
*which is an everlasting Righteousness*; of  
the Conformity of the Divine Will to the  
*Law of Truth*, in which the moral Attri-  
butes of God consist; of that Goodness in  
the Sovereign Mind, which gave Birth to  
the Universe: Add, what will be true of all  
good Men hereafter, a Consciousness of hav-  
ing an Interest in what they are contem-  
plating; Suppose them able to say, *This God*  
*is our God for ever and ever*: Would then  
be any longer to seek for what was their  
chief Happiness, their final Good? Could  
the utmost Stretch of their Capacities look  
further? Would not infinite perfect Good-  
ness be their very End, the last End and  
Object of their Affections; beyond which they  
could

could neither have, nor desire ; beyond which they could not form a Wish or Thought ?

SERMON  
XIV.

CONSIDER wherein that Presence of a Friend consists, which has often so strong an Effect, as wholly to possess the Mind, and intirely suspend all other Affections and Regards ; and which itself affords the highest Satisfaction and Enjoyment. He is within Reach of the Senses. Now, as our Capacities of Perception improve, we shall have, perhaps by some Faculty intirely new, a Perception of God's Presence with us in a nearer and stricter Way ; since it is certain He is more intimately present with us than any Thing else can be. Proof of the Existence and Presence of any Being is quite different from the immediate Perception, the Consciousness of it. What then will be the Joy of Heart, which His Presence, and *the Light of His Countenance*, who is the Life of the Universe, will inspire good Men with, when they shall have a Sensation, that He is the Sustainer of their Being, that they exist in him ; when they shall feel his Influence to cheer and enliven and support their Frame, in a Manner of which we have now no Conception ? He will be in a literal Sense *their Strength and their Portion for ever.*

SERM. WHEN we speak of Things so much above our Comprehension, as the Employment and Happiness of a future State, doubtless it behoves us to speak with all Modesty and Distrust of ourselves. But the Scripture represents the Happiness of that State under the Notions of *seeing God, seeing him as He is, knowing as we are known, and seeing Face to Face.* These Words are not general or undetermined, but express a particular determinate Happiness. And I will be bold to say, that nothing can account for, or come up to these Expressions, but only this, that God himself will be an Object to our Faculties, that He Himself will be our Happiness ; as distinguished from the Enjoyments of the present State, which seem to arise, not immediately from Him, but from the Objects He has adapted to give us Delight.

To conclude : Let us suppose a Person tired with Care and Sorrow and the Repetition of vain Delights which fill up the Round of Life ; sensible that every Thing here below in its best Estate is altogether Vanity. Suppose him to feel that Deficiency of Humane Nature, before taken Notice of ; and to be convinced that God alone was the adequate Supply

ply to it. What could be more applicable to SERM. a good Man, in this State of Mind ; or better XIV. express his present Wants and distant Hopes, his Passage through this World as a Progress towards a State of Perfection, than the following Passages in the Devotions of the Royal Prophet? They are plainly in an higher and more proper Sense applicable to This, than they could be to any Thing else.

*I have seen an End of all Perfection. Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? And there is none upon Earth that I desire in Comparison of Thee. My Flesh and my Heart faileth: but God is the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever. Like as the Hart desireth the Water-Brooks, so longeth my Soul after Thee, O God. My Soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God: when shall I come to appear before Him? How excellent is thy Loving Kindness, O God! and the Children of Men shall put their Trust under the Shadow of thy Wings. They shall be satisfied with the Plenteousness of thy House: And thou shalt give them Drink of thy Pleasures, as out of the River. For with thee is the Well of Life: And in thy Light shall we see Light. Blessed is the Man whom thou choosest, and receivest unto Thee:*

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SERM. *Thee : he shall dwell in thy Court, and shall be satisfied with the Pleasures of thy House, even of thy holy Temple.* Blessed is the People, O Lord, that can rejoice in Thee : they shall walk in the Light of thy Countenance. Their Delight shall be daily in thy Name, and in thy Righteousness shall they make their Boast. For thou art the Glory of their Strength : and in thy Loving-kindness They shall be exalted. As for me, I will behold thy Presence in Righteousness : and when I awake up after thy Likeness, I shall be satisfied with it. Thou shalt shew me the Path of Life ; in thy Presence is the Fulness of Joy, and at thy right hand there is Pleasure for evermore.

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SERMON

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## SERMON XV.

### *Upon the Ignorance of Man.*

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E C C L E S. viii. 16, 17.

*When I applied mine Heart to know Wisdom, and to see the Business that is done upon the Earth: Then I beheld all the Work of God, that a Man cannot find out the Work that is done under the Sun: Because though a Man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea further, though a wise Man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it.*

**T**HE Writings of *Solomon* are very SERM. much taken up with Reflections up- XV.  
on Humane Nature, and Humane Life; to which he hath added, in this Book, Reflections upon the Constitution of Things. And it is not improbable, that the little Satisfaction, and the great Difficulties he met with

SERM. with in his Researches into the general Con-  
XV. stitution of Nature, might be the Occasion  
of his confining himself, so much as he hath  
done, to Life and Conduct. However, up-  
on that joint Review he expresses great Ig-  
norance of the Works of God, and the Me-  
thod of his Providence in the Government  
of the World ; great Labour and Weariness  
in the Search and Observation he had em-  
ployed himself about ; and great Disappoint-  
ment, Pain, and even Vexation of Mind,  
upon that which he had remarked of the  
Appearances of Things, and of what was go-  
ing forward upon this Earth. This whole  
Review and Inspection, and the Result of  
it, Sorrow, Perplexity, a Sense of his ne-  
cessary Ignorance, suggests various Reflec-  
tions to his Mind. But, notwithstanding all  
this Ignorance and Dissatisfaction, there is  
somewhat upon which he assuredly rests and  
depends ; somewhat, which is the Conclusion  
of the whole Matter, and the only Concern  
of Man. Following this his Method and  
Train of Reflection, let us consider,

I. THE Assertion of the Text, the Igno-  
rance of Man ; that the wisest and most  
knowing cannot comprehend the Ways and  
Works of God : And then,

II. WHAT

II. **W H A T** are the just Consequences of SERM. this Observation and Knowledge of our own Ignorance, and the Reflection which it leads us to.

I. **T H E** wisest and most knowing cannot comprehend the Works of God, the Methods and Designs of his Providence in the Creation and Government of the World.

**C R E A T I O N** is absolutely and intirely out of our Debth, and beyond the Extent of our utmost Reach. And yet it is as certain that God made the World, as it is certain that Effects must have a Cause. It is indeed in general no more than Effects, that the most knowing are acquainted with: For as to Causes, they are as intirely in the Dark as the most Ignorant. What are the Laws by which Matter acts upon Matter, but certain Effects; which some, having observed to be frequently repeated, have reduced to general Rules? The real Nature and Essence of Beings likewise is what we are altogether ignorant of. All these Things are so intirely out of our Reach, that we have not the least Glimpse of them. And we know little more of ourselves, than we do of the World about us: How we were made, how our Being is continued and preserved, what the Faculties

SERM. Faculties of our Minds are, and upon what  
XV. the Power of exercising them depends. *I am*  
~~~~~ *fearfully and wonderfully made: Marvel-*  
*lous are thy Works, and that my Soul knoweth*  
*right well.* Our own Nature and the Ob-  
jects we are surrounded with, serve to raise  
our Curiosity; but we are quite out of a  
Condition of satisfying it. Every Secret  
which is disclosed, every Discovery which is  
made, every new Effect which is brought to  
View, serves to convince us of numberless  
more which remain concealed, and which  
we had before no Suspicion of. And what  
if we were acquainted with the whole Crea-  
tion, in the same Way and as thoroughly  
as we are with any single Object of it? What  
would all this natural Knowledge amount  
to? It must be a low Curiosity indeed which  
such superficial Knowledge could satisfy. On  
the contrary, would it not serve to convince  
us of our Ignorance still; and to raise our  
Desire of knowing the Nature of Things  
themselves, the Author, the Cause, and the  
End of them?

As to the Government of the World:  
Though from Consideration of the final  
Causes which come within our Knowledge;  
of Characters, personal Merit and Demerit;  
of

of the Favour and Disapprobation, which respectively are due and belong to the Righteous and the Wicked, and which therefore must necessarily be in a Mind which sees Things as they really are; though, I say, from hence we may know somewhat concerning the Designs of Providence in the Government of the World, enough to enforce upon us Religion and the Practice of Virtue: Yet, since the Monarchy of the Universe is a Dominion unlimited in Extent, and everlasting in Duration; the general System of it must necessarily be quite beyond our Comprehension. And, since there appears such a Subordination and Reference of the several Parts to each other, as to constitute it properly one Administration or Government; we cannot have a thorough Knowledge of any Part, without knowing the Whole. This surely should convince us, that we are much less competent Judges of the very small Part which comes under our Notice in this World, than we are apt to imagine. *No Heart can think upon these Things worthily: And who is able to conceive his Way? It is a Tempest which no Man can see: For the most Part of his Works are hid. Who can declare the Works*

of

SERM. of his Justice? for his Covenant is afar  
XV. off, and the Trial of all Things is in the  
End: i. e. The Dealings of God with the  
Children of Men are not yet compleated,  
and cannot be judged of by that Part  
which is before us. So that a Man cannot  
say, This is worse than that: For in Time  
they shall be well approved. Thy Faithful-  
ness, O Lord, reacheth unto the Clouds:  
Thy Righteousness standeth like the strong  
Mountains: Thy Judgments are like the  
great Deep. He hath made every Thing  
beautiful in his Time: Also he hath set the  
World in their Heart; so that no Man can  
find out the Work that God maketh from  
the Beginning to the End. And thus St  
Paul concludes a long Argument upon the  
various Dispensations of Providence: O the  
Depth of the Riches, both of the Wisdom  
and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable  
are his Judgments, and his Ways past find-  
ing out! For who hath known the Mind of  
the Lord?

THUS the Scheme of Providence, the  
Ways and Works of God, are too vast,  
of too large Extent for our Capacities.  
There is, as I may speak, such an Expanse  
of Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness, in  
the

the Formation and Government of the SERM.  
World, as is too much for us to take in or XV.  
comprehend. Power, and Wisdom, and  
Goodness, are manifest to us in all those  
Works of God, which come within our  
View: But there are likewise infinite Stores  
of each poured forth throughout the Im-  
mensity of the Creation; no Part of which  
can be thoroughly understood, without  
taking in its Reference and Respect to the  
whole: And this is what we have not Facul-  
ties for.

AND as the Works of God, and his Scheme  
of Government, are above our Capacities  
thoroughly to comprehend: So there possi-  
bly may be Reasons which originally made  
it fit that many Things should be concealed  
from us, which we have perhaps natural Ca-  
pacities of understanding; many Things con-  
cerning the Designs, Methods and Ends of  
Divine Providence in the Government of the  
World. There is no Manner of Absurdity  
in supposing a Veil on Purpose drawn over  
some Scenes of infinite Power, Wisdom,  
and Goodness, the Sight of which might  
some Way or other strike us too strongly;  
or that better Ends are designed and served  
by their being concealed, than could be by

SERM. their being exposed to our Knowledge. The  
XV. Almighty may cast Clouds and Darkness  
round about him, for Reasons and Purposes  
of which we have not the least Glimpse or  
Conception.

HOWEVER, it is surely reasonable, and what might have been expected, that Creatures in some Stage of their Being, suppose in the Infancy of it, should be placed in a State of Discipline and Improvement, where their Patience and Submission is to be tried by Afflictions, where Temptations are to be resisted, and Difficulties gone through in the Discharge of their Duty. Now if the greatest Pleasures and Pains of the present Life may be overcome and suspended, as they manifestly may, by Hope and Fear, and other Passions and Affections; then the Evidence of Religion, and the Sense of the Consequences of Virtue and Vice, might have been such, as intirely in all Cases to prevail over those Afflictions, Difficulties and Temptations; prevail over them so, as to render them absolutely none at all. But the very Notion itself now mentioned, of a State of Discipline and Improvement, necessarily excludes such sensible Evidence and Conviction of Religion, and of the Consequences

quences of Virtue and Vice. Religion consists in Submission and Resignation to the Divine Will. Our Condition in this World is a School of Exercise for this Temper: And our Ignorance, the Shallowness of our Reason, the Temptations, Difficulties, Afflictions, which we are exposed to, all equally contribute to make it so. The general Observation may be carried on; and whoever will attend to the Thing will plainly see, that less sensible Evidence, with less Difficulty in Practice, is the same, as more sensible Evidence, with greater Difficulty in Practice. Therefore Difficulties in Speculation as much come into the Notion of a State of Discipline, as Difficulties in Practice: And so the same Reason or Account is to be given of both. Thus, though it is indeed absurd to talk of the greater Merit of Assent, upon little or no Evidence, than upon Demonstration; yet the strict Discharge of our Duty, with less sensible Evidence, does imply in it a better Character, than the same Diligence in the Discharge of it upon more sensible Evidence. This fully accounts for and explains that Assertion of our Saviour, \* *Bles-*

X 2

*sed.*

\* Joh. xx. 29.

SERM. sed are they that have not seen, and yet have  
XV. believed; have become Christians and obeyed  
the Gospel, upon less sensible Evidence, than  
that which *Thomas*, to whom he is speaking,  
insisted upon.

BUT after all, the same Account is to be given, why we were placed in these Circumstances of Ignorance, as why Nature has not furnished us with Wings; namely, that we were designed to be Inhabitants of this Earth. I am afraid we think too highly of ourselves; of our Rank in the Creation, and of what is due to us. What Sphere of Action, what Business is assigned to Man, that he has not Capacities and Knowledge fully equal to? It is manifest he has Reason, and Knowledge, and Faculties superior to the Business of the present World: Faculties which appear superfluous, if we do not take in the Respect which they have to somewhat further, and beyond it. If to acquire Knowledge were our proper End, we should indeed be but poorly provided: But if somewhat else be our Business and Duty, we may, notwithstanding our Ignorance, be well enough furnished for it; and the Observation of our Ignorance may

may be of Assistance to us in the Discharge of it.

II. LET us then consider, what are the Consequences of this Knowledge and Observation of our own Ignorance, and the Reflection it leads to.

First, We may learn from it, with what Temper of Mind a Man ought to enquire into the Subject of Religion; namely, with Expectation of finding Difficulties, and with a Disposition to take up and rest satisfied with any Evidence whatever, which is real.

HE should before-hand expect Things mysterious, and such as he will not be able thoroughly to comprehend, or go to the Bottom of. To expect a distinct comprehensive View of the whole Subject, clear of Difficulties and Objections, is to forget our Nature and Condition; neither of which admit of such Knowledge, with Respect to any Science whatever. And to enquire with this Expectation, is not to enquire as a Man, but as one of another Order of Creatures.

DU E Sense of the general Ignorance of Man would also beget in us a Disposition to take up and rest satisfied with any Evidence whatever, which is real. I mention this as the contrary to a Disposition, of which there

SERMON. are not wanting Instances, to find Fault with  
XV. and reject Evidence, because it is not such as  
was desired. If a Man were to walk by Twilight, must he not follow his Eyes as much  
as if it were broad Day and clear Sunshine? Or if he were obliged to take a Journey by  
Night, would he not give heed to any *Light*  
*shining in the Darkness, till the Day should break and the Day-Star arise?* It would not  
be altogether unnatural for him to reflect how  
much better it were to have Day-light; he  
might perhaps have great Curiosity to see the  
Country round about him; he might lament  
that the Darkness concealed many extended  
Prospects from his Eyes, and wish for the Sun  
to draw away the Veil: But how ridiculous  
would it be, to reject with Scorn and Dis-  
dain the Guidance and Direction, which that  
lesser Light might afford him, because it was  
not the Sun itself; If the Make and Constitu-  
tion of Man, the Circumstances he is placed  
in, or the Reason of Things affords the  
least Hint or Intimation, that Virtue is the  
Law he is born under; Scepticism itself  
should lead him to the most strict and inviola-  
ble Practice of it; that he may not make the  
dreadful Experiment, of leaving the Course  
of Life marked out for him by Nature, what-  
ever

## *the Ignorance of Man.* 311

ever that Nature be, and entring Paths of his SERM. own, of which he can know neither the Dan- XV. gers nor the End. For though no Danger be seen, yet Darkness, Ignorance and Blindness are no Manner of Security.

Secondly, OUR Ignorance is the proper Answer to many Things, which are called Objections against Religion ; particularly, to those which arise from the Appearances of Evil and Irregularity in the Constitution of Nature and the Government of the World. In all other Cases 'tis thought necessary to be thoroughly acquainted with the whole of the Scheme, even one of so narrow a Compass as those which are formed by Men, in order to judge of the Goodness or Badness of it: And the most slight and superficial View of any Humane Contrivance comes abundantly nearer to a thorough Knowledge of it, than that Part, which we know of the Government of the World, does to the general Scheme and System of it ; to the whole Set of Laws by which it is governed. From our Ignorance of the Constitution of Things, and the Scheme of Providence in the Government of the World ; from the Reference the several Parts have to each other, and to the Whole ; and from our not being able to

SERM. see the End and the Whole ; it follows, that  
XV. however perfect Things are, they must even  
necessarily appear to us otherwise, less perfect  
than they are \*.

Thirdly,

\* Suppose some very *complicated Piece of Work*, some *System* or *Constitution*, formed for some *general End*, to which each of the *Parts* had a *Reference*. The Perfection or *justness* of this Work or Constitution would consist in the Reference and *Respect*, which the several Parts have to the general Design. This Reference of Parts to the general Design may be infinitely various, both in *Degree* and *Kind*. Thus one Part may only contribute and be subservient to another ; this to a Third ; and so on through a long Series, the last Part of which alone may contribute immediately and directly to the general Design. Or a Part may have this distant Reference to the general Design, and may also contribute immediately to it. For Instance : If the general Design or End, for which the complicated Frame of Nature was brought into Being, is *Happiness* ; whatever affords present Satisfaction, and likewise tends to carry on the Course of Things, hath this double Respect to the general Design. Now suppose a Spectator of that Work or Constitution was in a great Measure ignorant of such various Reference to the general End, whatever that End be ; and that, upon a very slight and partial View which we had of the Work, several Things appeared to his Eye as *disproportionate* and *wrong* ; others, *just* and *beautiful* : What would He gather from these *Appearances* ? He would immediately conclude there was a *Probability*, if he could see the whole Reference of the Parts appearing *wrong* to the general Design, that this would destroy the Appearance of *Wrongness* and *Disproportion* : But there is no *Probability*, that the Reference would destroy the particular right *Appearances*, though that Reference might shew the Thing already appearing *just*, to be so likewise in an *higher Degree* or *another Manner*. There is a *Probability*, that the right *Appearances* were intended : There

Thirdly, SINCE the Constitution of Nature, and the Methods and Designs of Providence in the Government of the World, are above our Comprehension, we should acquiesce in, and rest satisfied with, our Ignorance, turn our Thoughts from that which is above and beyond us, and apply ourselves to that which is level to our Capacities, and which is our real Business and Concern. Knowledge is not our proper Happiness. Whoever will in the least attend to the Thing will see, that 'tis the Gaining, not the Having of it, which is the Entertainment of the Mind. Indeed, if the proper Happiness of Man consisted in Knowledge considered as a Possession or Treasure, Men who are possessed of the largest Share would have a very ill Time of it; as they would be infinitely more sensible than others, of their Poverty in this Respect. Thus *He who increases Knowledge would eminently increase Sorrow.*

Men

is no Probability, that the wrong Appearances were. We cannot suspect Irregularity and Disorder to be designed. The Pillars of a Building appear beautiful; but their being likewise its Support does not destroy that Beauty: There still remains a Reason to believe that the Architect intended the beautiful Appearance, after we have found out the Reference, Support. It would be reasonable for a Man of himself to think thus, upon the first Piece of Architecture he ever saw.

SERM. Men of deep Research and curious Inquiry  
XV. should just be put in Mind, not to mistake  
what they are doing. If their Discoveries  
serve the Cause of Virtue and Religion, in  
the way of Proof, Motive to Practice, or  
Assistance in it; or if they tend to render  
Life less unhappy, and promote its Satisfac-  
tions; then they are most usefully employed:  
But bringing Things to Light, alone and of it-  
self, is of no manner of Use, any otherwise  
than as an Entertainment or Diversion. Nei-  
ther is this at all amiss, if it does not take up  
the Time which should be employed in bet-  
ter Works. But it is evident that there is ano-  
ther Mark set up for us to aim at; another  
End appointed us to direct our Lives to: An  
End, which the most Knowing may fail of,  
and the most Ignorant arrive at. *The secret*  
*Things belong unto the Lord our God; but*  
*those Things which are revealed belong unto us,*  
*and to our Children for ever, that we*  
*may do all the Words of this Law.* Which  
Reflection of Moses, put in general Terms, is,  
that the only Knowledge, which is of any  
Avail to us, is that which teaches us our  
Duty, or assists us in the Discharge of it. The  
Oeconomy of the Universe, the Course of  
Nature, Almighty Power exerted in the Cre-  
ation

ation and Government in the World, is out SER. XV. of our Reach. What would be the Consequence, if we could really get an Insight into these Things, is very uncertain; whether it would assist us in, or divert us from what we have to do in this present State. If then there be a Sphere of Knowledge, of Contemplation and Employment, level to our Capacities, and of the utmost Importance to us; we ought surely to apply ourselves with all Diligence to This our proper Business, and esteem every Thing else nothing, nothing as to us, in Comparison of it. Thus *Job*, discoursing of natural Knowledge, how much it is above us, and of Wisdom in general, says, *God understandeth the Way thereof, and He knoweth the Place thereof. And unto Man He said, Behold, the Fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom, and to depart from Evil is Understanding*, Other Orders of Creatures may perhaps be let into the secret Counsels of Heaven; and have the Designs and Methods of Providence, in the Creation and Government of the World, communicated to them: But this does not belong to our Rank or Condition. *The Fear of the Lord, and to depart from Evil*, is the only Wisdom which Man should aspire after, as His Work and Business.

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SERM. Business. The same is said, and with the same  
XV. Connexion and Context, in the Conclusion  
of the Book of *Ecclesiastes*. Our Ignorance, and the little we can know of other Things, affords a Reason why we should not perplex ourselves about them: But no Way invalidates that which is the *Conclusion of the whole Matter, Fear God, and keep his Commandments; for this is the whole Concern of Man.* So that *Socrates* was not the first who endeavoured to draw Men off from labouring after, and laying Stress upon other Knowledge, in Comparison of that which related to Morals. Our Province is Virtue and Religion, Life and Manners; the Science of improving the Temper, and making the Heart better. This is the Field assigned us to cultivate: How much it has lain neglected is indeed astonishing. Virtue is demonstrably the Happiness of Man: It consists in good Actions, proceeding from a good Principle, Temper, or Heart. Overt-acts are intirely in our Power. What remains is, that we learn to *keep our Heart*; to govern and regulate our Passions, Mind, Affections: That so we may be free from the Impotencies of Fear, Envy, Malice, Covetousness, Ambition; that we may be clear of these, consider-  
ed

ed as Vices seated in the Heart, considered as SERM. constituting a general wrong Temper ; from which general wrong Frame of Mind, all the mistaken Pursuits, and far the greatest Part of the Unhappiness of Life, proceed. He, who should find out one Rule to assist us in this Work, would deserve infinitely better of Mankind, than all the Improvers of other Knowledge put together.

*Lastly, L E T us adore that infinite Wisdom and Power and Goodness, which is above our Comprehension. To whom hath the Root of Wisdom been revealed ? Or who hath known her wise Counsels ? There is one wise and greatly to be feared ; the Lord sitting upon his Throne. He created her, and saw her, and numbered her, and poured her out upon all his Works. If it be thought a considerable Thing, to be acquainted with a few, a very few, of the Effects of infinite Power and Wisdom ; the Situation, Bigness, and Revolution of some of the heavenly Bodies ; what Sentiments should our Minds be filled with concerning Him, who appointed to each its Place and Measure and Sphere of Motion, all which are kept with the most uniform Constancy ? Who stretched out the Heavens, and telleth the Number of the Stars,*

SERM. Stars, and calleth them all by their Names.

XV. Who laid the Foundations of the Earth, who, comprehendeth the Dust of it in a Measure and weigheth the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Ballance. And, when we have recounted all the Appearances which come within our View, he must add, *Lo, these are Part of his Ways; but how little a Portion is heard of Him? Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto Perfection? It is as high as Heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than Hell; what canst thou know?*

THE Conclusion is, that in all Lowliness of Mind we set lightly by Ourselves: That we form our Temper to an implicit Submission to the Divine Majesty; beget within ourselves an absolute Resignation to all the Methods of his Providence, in his Dealings with the Children of Men: That, in the deepest Humility of our Souls, we prostrate ourselves before Him, and join in that celestial Song; *Great and marvellous are thy Works, Lord God Almighty! just and true are thy Ways, thou King of Saints! Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorifie thy Name?*

# SIX SERMONS

PREACHED UPON

## PUBLIC OCCASIONS.

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SERM. I. Preached before the Society for Propagating the Gospel.

M A T T H. xxiv. 14.

*And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the World, for a Witness unto all Nations.*

Page 1

SERM. II. Preached before the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Sheriffs, and the Governors of the several Hospitals of the City of London.

P R O V. xxii. 2.

*The Rich and Poor meet together : the Lord is the maker of them all.*

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SERM. III. Preached before the House of Lords, Jan. 30, 1740-41.

I P E T.

*And not using your Liberty for a Cloke of Maliciousness, but as the Servants of God.* 55

S E R M. IV. Preached at the Annual Meeting of the Charity Children at Christ-Church.

P R O V. xxii. 6.

*Train up a Child in the Way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.* 85

S E R M. V. Preached before the House of Lords, on the Anniversary of his Majesty's Accession to the Throne.

I T I M. ii. 1, 2.

*I exhort, that first of all, Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks be made for all Men: For Kings, and for all that are in Authority: that we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godliness and Honesty* 115

S E R M. VI. Preached before the Governors of the London Infirmary.

I P E T. iv. 8.

*And above all Things have fervent Charity among yourselves: For Charity shall cover the Multitude of Sins.* 133

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